The MYSTERY OF THE OLD MILL

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THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD MILL

LISITA

The Mystery of The Old Mill

BY

ELIZA ANN WEBB

This story, though founded on facts, and containing some facts, is largely fiction; but typical of life in an earlier day in these particular localities.

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DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

In memory of the stories we learned around the fireside of childhood days, in the vicinity of the old mill, where the strange mystery sprang up in the early eighties.

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That all with one accord
  May read the story I have told,
And give a thought to passing time,
  Or the things that are growing old.

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD MILL

CHAPTER I.

LISITA.

Almost a hundred years ago on the western bank of a creek that flowed into a larger stream of water about a mile below, stood a grist mill. In front of the mill, close by the roadside lay a round, flat stone, known as the mill rock. Forty years had come and gone and upon this stone many a weary traveller had sat to rest. Yet there were those who sat there in later years, that could not rest, for away in the distance a phantom like figure in the form of a man, seemed to be approaching. The muscles that had relaxed to rest on the mill-stone were now tense, as if ready for any emergency, as the strange figure appeared in the bright moonlight. Assuredly growing smaller, changing its form to that of a child, clothed in a robe of mid-

night black, gliding along noiselessly, stopping here and there to utter a low, sad cry, then pass on to the fence on the bank by the mill, and gaze into the smiling waters of the mill pond below.

In the year of 1845 in a humble log cabin, in a remote district of what is now West Virginia, and far from what the modern world would call civilization, Lisita, our heroine was born, and destined to become a child of the mill or its vicinity. At the eary age of twelve years she could cook, sew, knit and spin, and could really go through with the whole routine of daily household duties unassisted, in the home of her maiden aunt, with whom she lived after her mother's death. Lisita was very beautiful in form and features. Her eyes, in whose liquid depths there was much meaning, were a dark brown, as was also her hair. Her countenance was open and frank. Her face was fair to see, and as she sat at the spinning wheel, her deft fingers plying the thread, she was beautiful indeed, and a queen might have envied her for the natural beauty and comeliness she possessed.

It was not the outward beauty alone that prompted the few playmates that Lisita had,

to love her and seek her, but the beautiful life within, as well, which was always longing for something better than she had known, and the great soul in that small habitation of clay was struggling at its bands to break forth and swell and grow, and fill the place that God had intended it to fill in this world. And, dear readers, permit me to say as I stand with my face toward life's sunset, the saddest death I know of is the death of an inspiration, a good intent, a noble thought or the dying out of a talent.

Lisita, in the home of her precise and exacting Aunt Nancy Lake, which was surrounded with vines, roses and shrubbery, beyond which one could see much wooded land, a meadow and some cleared fields, felt a longing for a higher life than she had known. In that sparsely settled neighborhood, with its homes so far apart, and the closest school three miles away, they seemed to be entirely alone, except when some neighbor came to spend the day, or a traveller stopped to eat a meal with them. Her aunt had a collection of old books from which she read and learned much. She also read the Bible and could find each text the preacher used in his monthly

sermons, at the little meeting house about three miles away where she and her aunt would go the first Sunday in each month, to hear him explain the Scriptures and talk of the heavenly home, exhort his hearers to follow the Golden Rule, and tell them of a "crown of righteousness that is laid up for all who diligently serve Him here."

Lisita and her aunt would drive through the lanes and shady woodland, in their one horse buggy, till they came to the little church where the country folks were wont to meet each month. This trip to church with an occasional day at a neighboring farmhouse, her books, a chance traveller from whom she gained new ideas, the song of the birds, the pure air, the warm sunshine and daily household duties, went to make up the song of life for Lisita.

CHAPTER II.

COEHERN.

About one hundred and fifty miles from the home of Lisita and her Aunt Nancy Lake, was a beautiful farm of about four hundred acres. One hundred acres of this land was cleared and under a high state of cultivation. On a litle elevation, back from the river, standing out as the best homestead in the country, was Cohern, the home of the Coewells. In later years it is known to some people as Coehern and I will call it this throughout my story.

It was supposed that Cornelius Coewell's grandfather settled there soon after "Mad" Anthony Waynes' victory at Fallen Timbers and the treaty of 1795, after securing a grant or title for the land from the Virginia land office. He with his wife and two sons had crossed the mountains carrying their earthly belongings on horseback and driving a cow and five head of sheep, reached this vast track

of timber land early in the Spring, cut away the trees and erected a small cabin where they reared their family, after which Cornelius Coewell finally fell heir to the "homeplace" and Victor Coewell, the son of Cornelius, the only living child, would in time become heir to the farm, with its ample buildings, fertile fields, orchards and valuable timber lands. A well had been dug close by the house, which afforded a never-failing supply of pure, cold water, and when the old wooden bucket, drawn up by a windlass, reached the top, one might drink to his satisfaction of the refreshing draught.

A walk had been laid with large, flat rocks found on the land. The hollyhock, the bleeding-heart, the touch-me-not, the bachelor-button, white lily and hundred-leaf rose, wafted a fragrance on the breeze that mingled with that of the crab-apple, the ground rose and the wild flowers of the hillside. And were you ever to gaze on such varieties of natural beauty, as we look backward across the years into the dim past and see at Coehern, it will linger long in memory.

Cornelius Coewell, a grandson of the first settler, owned Coehern at that time. A man

who was much liked and admired by all the people in the neighborhood for miles around, for his honesty, his kindly attitude toward his neighbors, his integrity, benevolent Christian spirit and his uprightness in his every day life. Also for his well kept grounds, orchards, gardens, well tilled fields of wheat, oats, corn, potatoes and vegetables of all kinds. On this beautiful evening in June, Cornelius Coewell and his comely wife, Roanne, stood by the well and drank of its clear, sparkling waters, talking of the Well of whose waters we may drink and never thirst again, as it is spoken of in the Bible, A well of water springing up into everlasting life." Uncle Sambo and Aunt Rachel, slaves or trusted servants of the Coewells, were milking the cows in the lot, just as Victor came riding up on his favorite mare, holding a letter in his hand, bearing a foreign post-mark. This letter caused some excitement among the Coewells, for they had no relatives or acquaintances in England, though their grandfather had come from Wales years ago, settled in Eastern Virginia and later crossed the mountains, to build a cabin home, and all trace of his relatives had been

lost years ago. They were much concerned to know who had written it and how the writer had secured their name and address, so Roanne tore it open and read it aloud to the rest. While she was reading it, the cabin home of Nancy Lake one hundred and fifty miles away, was wrapped in a mantle of darkness and mystery, for the beautiful maiden who was wont to sit within and spin, and do a thousand other things in the daily routine, had been stolen and hidden away.

Twilight is falling over Coehern and on the deep, dense woods, miles away, a girl sees the twilight shadows fall deeper and darker as she is carried far, far away from her early home, with a dark-eyed stranger as her only guide and companion.

THE OLD MILL

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD MILL.

Water or grist mills are a thing of the past in this state, so far as I know, except in remote mountain districts, and most of them have been torn down or left on the banks of the various streams of water, to decay. Many years ago most all creeks and smaller streams of water were dotted here and there with these mills. The people came from miles around, to the mill to have their grinding done, swap opinions or "hosses" and jack-knives and return to their various homes with heavy grists and light hearts. About two miles from Coehern, on the bank of a creek that empties into the clear, winding willow-hemmed banks of the river that flows in the north and east of the vine-clad hills and productive river bottom-lands of he Coe-wells, was a grist mill. The old mill stood on the western bank of the creek, at the very edge of the water, and the mill wheel stood

out so that the pent-up waters, pouring through the open gate, might turn it and grind the golden grain from the rich harvests of the farmers, who would bring enough each grinding day for the following week's supply of bread-stuff and some who lived a long distance from the mill, brought wagon loads so they would not have to come so often.

The jolly, dusty old miller joked and laughed with boys and girls, men and women, as he numbered each "grist" that was brought in. And nothing pleased him better than a good "turn-out" on "grinding days," for well he knew that from each sack of grain he could collect so much toll.

The mill-dam caused the water to raise far up the creek, so that skating on the mill-pond in winter, and boating, and sometimes swimming, in the summer, made good sport for the young folks, and many of them were sorry to hear their names called when grist was ready for they knew it would be another week before they could meet again at the mill. Above the noise of the mill grinding grain, you could hear the splash, splash of the water against the mill wheel, and the wheel in turning would throw the water into the air,

as it rattled and splashed, on and on, singing to those who were in gay moods, of moonlight nights, strolls through the woodland, husking-bees, log-rollings, quilting parties, love, mirth and gladness. To those in sadder moods, who were older in years, it sang of the west, where the sun was setting when the day was about over, of the night drawing near and of home, Heaven and rest.

And, as the story goes, on moonlight nights a phantom maiden walked alone, near the old mill, and lingered by the pond, uttering a weird cry, so melancholy in its notes, as it died away on the night winds, that those who heard it never forgot it. Yes, those who saw and heard it, remember yet, and as the vague shadows of a dream return, so the memories linger, of a dark-robed maiden, standing by the old mill, uttering a low, sad cry.

CHAPTER IV.

HIDDEN AWAY.

Lisita, as usual, arose at six o'clock on this bright and never-to-be-forgotten day in June, hastily dressed herself, washed her face and combed her hair, so that she might assist her aunt with the morning work. She swept the porch and steps, stopping before she went in, to arrange a lovely bouquet of roses and violets for their breakfast table, which was covered with a home-spun linen cloth. The napkins too, were of home-spun linen and the plain wooden-handled knives and forks, as well as the pewter spoons, glowed from the effects of a good scouring with wood ashes, by the same slender hands that threw the shuttle of the spinning wheel. Lisita brought the fresh roll of butter from the milk house, and that, with eggs, dried raspberries, coffee, milk and wheat biscuits, made up their morning meal. After breakfast she busied herself putting the dishes away. Then with mop,

brush and broom, wielded by her skillful hand, everything in the little cottage put on that shiny appearance that those wayside farmerettes of fifty years ago, were so artful in producing. She looked out and saw her aunt coming across the lot with a pail of milk, so foamy and white that it made her think of the crested billows and the foam on the waves, of which she had learned in her old reader.

Lisita and her aunt lived a very quiet and peaceful life, known only by the country folk and a chance traveller who stopped to eat a meal from their table that was always spread with clean and wholesome food, or to get a fresh drink from the well, whose bucket was moss-grown, or to rest in the quiet shade where nature abounds and fills the soul with a longing to understand God and his great works.

Lisita, who was now in her fourteenth year, seemed to see beauty in everything. The song of the birds was music for her. She loved to be out in the open fields, the warm sunshine and balmy air. The grassy meadows, covered with dew each morning, meant a new day for her. The exercise made her strong in body

and mind but as she roamed through the fields with life's sustaining, unseen ocean of air, forever floating around her, she seemed to know it was there, but was unmindful of its value to her. She did not know that it was deep breathing that helped to make her eyes so bright, her cheeks so rosy and steps so nimble. The great oak, in whose quiet shade she sat, seemed to talk to her of its sturdy growth from year to year until it was king of the forest, and she compared her life to it, as she wanted to grow in body, mind and soul so that she might be a queen among women in her own right, in the doing of things as her better nature told her.

A stranger stopped at the little farmhouse for dinner that day, who was old and gray and bent with years, and Lisita and her aunt tried in every way to make him comfortable but he did not talk much and left them abruptly, saying " I must be on my way for I am on a long journey." They did not see him as he ran swiftly across the fields to the clump of trees near the woods, and quickly removed his wig and gray beard.

After the dinner work was done up, Lisita, with bucket in hand, walked across the field

and to the top of the hill near the woods, to gather the berries that grew in clusters there. She had almost filled her bucket and the berries never were so nice, large and juicy as now, but hark! what was that noise in the bushes? Not the sleek gliding rattler who warns before he strikes; but a hidden foe in the form of a man sprang lithely from behind some bushes, threw a shawl over Lisita's head and shoulders, took her in his arms and ran swiftly toward the deep woods beyond the pasture field. And in spite of her cries, and efforts to get loose, he bore her swiftly through the woods where his pony was tied in waiting.

VICTOR COEWELL

CHAPTER V.

VICTOR COEWELL.

Victor Coewell, a youthful looking lad, in his eighteenth year, alighted from the handsome sorrel mare on which he was riding, after giving his mother the strange looking letter—the very mare his father had given him on his last birthday and no wonder he felt proud as he gazed at the arched neck, long, slender-bodied, clean limbed animal that would carry him over the highroads, through the lanes and by-ways, whose paths were intricate and some times narrow and steep, with trees and cliffs of rocks on either side. Yet, Bess, as she was named, had always managed to carry him to safety. Victor was strong and muscular, and were he living in the twentieth century, he would be termed a very great athlete. He had fair complexion, light brown hair and blue eyes. He was six feet tall and weighed one hundred and eighty pounds, a good specimen of manhood indeed.

He attended the three months school that had been taught for a few years at Millgrove, a distance of three miles from Coehern. He also received some instruction from private teachers in the home.

Victor was kindly disposed toward every one and was congenial in the home, as well as among the slaves or servants, unless some of them had not taken the proper care of his dog and horse. If he found this to be true, he would get very angry. His father, a man who was fond of the chase, kept a kennel for his hounds, and his son who also liked the chase, was never happier than when monted on his favorite mare, with his attendants following, and the hounds, Leader and Dan, Trooper and Truboy, at their heels. Truboy, his favorite, was a deerhound of the Scotch breed of large hounds. He resembled a greyhound in build, but was stronger and heavier, with a rough, tawny coat. He was about twenty-eight inches high and weighed almost a hundred pounds. At that time, in this neighborhood, there were bear, deer, and wild turkeys in the woods, and a great many deer were killed by settlers who concealed themselves close by a deerlick. In the chase, after the dogs got a

deer or fox started, the hunters would gallop to the low-gap and somtimes shoot the deer, as it came into view, with the hounds in hot pursuit. If it was a fox, they would build a fire of logs and pine knots, at night, and listen to the baying of the hounds, which was music to the huntsman's ear, especially when they could hear their favorite hound in the lead! "But how on airth dey cuold stinguish de yelpin of one houn' from de odder," always puzzled Uncle Sambo, and he often said, "Wid de houn's to be fed up and de hosses to be rubbed down watah to draw, made li'l Eph resemble an ober-wuked nigger."

It was on one of these hunting trips that Victor lingered behind the rest, for he wanted to be alone in the home of the trees. His trained ear would catch every sound which was music to him, and he often paused by the brookside to hear its deep gurgling sound, as it talked to him of its journey to the far-away sea. How it danced, laughed and talked of its wild, long glide through green meadows, mossy dells and wooded vales. The trees too, were his friends and seemed to speak to him of the great place he was to fill in the hearts of many, and most especially of one. Of the

gleam he was to follow on and on, whose glimpses can only be caught by those who follow its bright rays up, up and ever onward to its heights, where one can pause and hear naught but the echo of his own pulsation. The rays of this gleam which Victor seemed to see, which we cannot find on land or sea, as a "pillow of fire in the night and a cloud by day," hovered over him now and filled his soul with a longing to reach the heights, where loving hearts, pure minds and great souls may speak to each other; not in words, but in thought and understanding; the height that pure manhood and womanhood may reach. He was startled by the yelping of a hound in the distance and he now realized that he had meditated long, in the forest, for under shadow of the thick trees it was almost dark and the night-birds were calling to their mates. The rattler was lurking in the pathway of the rabbit, and the night-hawk, perched aloft, uttering a low, weird cry, while nature was spreading a curtain of shadow over hill and vale.

But hark! the yelping of a hound, maybe Truboy on the hunt of him, so he went in that direction and when he was very near he

thought he heard a gruff voice in the distance, calling to the dog. He hurried on, just in time to see the largest hound he ever saw, running swiftly into the depths of the forest. He resembled Truboy in build, and must have been of the same breed of dogs, but was gray in color and much larger.

"What on airth kep' yo so long and no game eider?," asked Sambo. "Oh, I was day-dreaming," said Victor. "Day dreamin'? De night dreamin', wid de night hoss and oder pesterin' tings am enuf fo' me, let alone sottin down in de woods whar all dem beastses and creepin' tings am," said Sambo. "Yes, but I was musing," said Victor. "Wall, music am moughty fine when played on de banjo and fiddle, but de squall ob de wild-cat, de rattle ob de rattler and de scream ob de painter, am too much fo' me; besides yo' was not fur frum de ole mill whar its too spookiastical fo' me. Yas, sah, an' I doan parade aroun' dar whereabouts," said Sambo. "She is liable to come here some night," said Victor. Uncle Sambo now trembled with fear, and said "O, Lawd, don' let her cum any closter dan de ole mill, and if she hab to sing dat low filutin' death-bell music, let her sing it to de pon'." This

amused Victor, and he ray away with Sambo at his heels. He went upstairs to bed and was sure he heard a woman scream somewhere. It sounded near the top of the hill over in the nearest woods. He went out in the yard and listened for some time but could hear no sound, and retired for the night.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LETTER.

Roanne Coewell gazed long and in wonder at the strange looking letter, bearing a foreign postmark. It was directed to Cornelius Coewell, written in a plain and delicate hand. She tore open the letter and was very much surprised to see an emblem or insignia of a Coat of Arms stamped on the letterhead which was the heredity ensign armorial of his ancestors, and consisted of figures borne on a shield, signifying descendants of royalty, or as marks of distinguished or dignified persons. The letter read as follows:

Edinburg, Scotland,

May 10th., 1859.

My dear Mr. Coewell:

I have heard through correspondence with some very prominent families of America, of your unbounded hospitality. My wife and I hope we are not asking too much when we

ask if we may partake of that kind hospitality, while we sojourn in your picturesque country. We have reason to believe that some of our relatives (in whom we are greatly interested), live, or have lived, in western Virginia. We have been directed to you as one who could give some information, or aid us in the search. We will sail for America in the early Autumn and write you immediately on date of our arrival on your shores.

Respectfully,

CECIL COX.

Roanne Coewell, who was comely and fair, returned the ardent gaze of her husband, and said "Cornelius, this is the last day of June, and if they sail in early Autumn we may expect them in November, and maybe not before Thanksgiving, when most of our work will be 'laid by'." "Yes, Ma, we will have things in readiness for our guests. And that makes me think, Roanne—I must rob the bees tomorrow." "It seems like we will have so much to be thankful for this year, Cornelius." "Yes, we have great need to be thankful to God for our great harvests that have never seemed so bountiful so far before, and also

we must not forget to be thankful to Him each day for His goodness and mercy toward us, always having thankful hearts."

With their ample house-room, wide, old fireplaces and plenty of wood stored up to burn, their rich harvests of grain, fruit and vegetables of all kinds, it looked like they could amply share their hospitality with many more. Aunt Rachel, whose voice could be heard from the milk-house, was saying "I spose sum of dem roil, white trash'll be stampedin' all round' here 'fore long, an' I'se gwine to tell yo' dat dis cullud lady am a leetle mite shy of strangers. An' wid' de screamin' in de woods dat Sambo an' Marse Vic dun hearn, an' de maiden rampagin' roun' de ole mill, singin' like a dyin' swan and de big gray houn' on de hill, hit makes us tink of hants. An' I dun tell yo' Chloe White am ponderin' on it ebery minnit."

Slavery was not so popular west of the mountains, but Aunt Rachel, who was really a slave, was a very trusty negro, as was Uncle Sam, and they were allowed many privileges which most slaves of that time did not have. One of these privileges was to always have their say about things, and when a few years

later the slaves were freed, many of them wanted to stay with their masters. Such was the case at Coewells, and his slaves or servants remained with him after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Abraham Lincoln, Jaunary first, 1863.

CHAPTER VII.

A PERILOUS RIDE.

Lisita, in spite of her pleadings and cries to be loosened, was swiftly borne on and on through the forest. After they had travelled a long way, she noticed they were going at a much slower gait, and she guessed it must be dark. Oh, how terrible it all was, and why did he not talk or tell her where he was taking her. She struggled again to loose herself, and in the struggle raised the shawl over her face. She could see that it was dark but they were near the top of a hill and after they descended on the other side they came out into the open. It was lighter now and on and on they went at a good pace. She begged him once more to take her back and asked why he was taking her away. He answered "No harm will come to you, fair one. If you keep quiet on this pony I'll carry you safely to your new home, where you'll like it, I'm sure." "I'll run away from you too, for I don't have to

stay with anyone I don't like and don't know." "Then you'll learn to like me, won't you?" "No, I won't, and the farther I go, the more I hate you." "Well, then, you will hate me much, for we are going farther and farther and you are now full fifty miles from home."

As soon as they began to see signs of light in the east, he shunned the roads and open fields and followed the wooded paths. They were coming into a beautiful grove of trees now, overlooking a winding valley through which flowed a stream of water. It was hardly light enough to see it good yet. He said "We will rest here and eat." And were you ever out in the early morning to see the dawning of the day? Lisita was, and she looked far to the east where the faint streaks were growing lighter. The mists from the lower lands were rising and the songs of feathered warblers seemed to blend with the voice of nature in caroling a song of gladness, at the dawning of another day. A new song, as it were, and she wondered if God, who had attuned their voices, did not direct their glad song. She knew he did, and all fear left her. He spoke of eating and she wondered what they would eat, when behind a clump of bushes she

saw another pony tied in waiting. He untied the pony from the tree, brought it around near her and removed the saddle pockets. He opened them and handed her a bottle of milk, some meat and bread. She first thought she would not eat, but after he assured her no harm would come to her while in his care, and that another day's and night's ride would bring them to his people, she ate and drank for she knew that would strengthen her, and she intended to get away from him at the first opportunity. He said "Your chance in life will be much better than it would have been if I had never known you, and besides you will learn many things you never knew, and I think can aid us in securing a great fortune." She shuddered as she thought how terrible it all was; and her poor aunt. What would become of her now? She seemed to resign herself to the surroundings at present but fully resolved to run away the first chance she got. She knew it was no use to try it now for his dark eyes were ever watching her, and if she did not make good her escape he might treat her cruelly. When daylight came she looked her abductor over and over. He had dark hair and eyes, was tall and slender with

rather broad shoulders. He seemed to be active and quick in his movements. His long slender fingers fumbled with a gold watch chain that hung from a watch he looked at often, as he paced restlessly to and fro. Lisita looked very beautiful in the early morning, with the brown shawl around her shoulders, and the grove of trees as a background. Though she was tired she was glad to move on when the ponies were ready, but in her bright brown eyes there was a far-away look as of a foreboding of evil. He asked her if she would not ride the other pony and assured her it was safe and sure-footed. She readily assented to this for two distinct reasons: one, that she would not have to be so near him, and the other, she might run a good race for escape if a chance presented itself. The pony she mounted was a bright dun in color, with spots of a darker brown, or black—what some of the old settlers termed a Rattlesnake pony. It had an even, easy gait—and how she wished she could be back with her aunt and have this pony to use for her very own. But alas! she was destined to ride in another direction, where all was strange and new. Toward evening as they followed a winding

path around a hillside, they could see a creek in the valley below, with a grist mill on its bank. His pony was in the lead, the path getting narrower and rocky, and as he turned in his saddle to tell her they would have about two hours' ride yet, his pony stumbled and threw him over a small cliff of rocks. Now was Lisita's chance and she rode as fast as the brown pony could carry her over that narrow and rocky path. She soon came in sight of a creek, where she could see a riffle or ford, and it was only a few minutes till she came into a road leading down to the ford. After she crossed and ascended the bank, she came into a good road, following the west bank of the creek, and if ever a pony and its rider made good time, they did. Her hair was flying loose in the wind, and the fair rider felt that she was almost flying over the road, but as night was coming on, she took to a by-path that led her into the woods where she could conceal herself from her foe until it was light enough to see her way again. She passed around a deep, wooded hollow, where she could see smoke ascending, and heard the yelping of a hound. Her first thought was to make her way down and ask

for shelter for the night, but she was afraid, lest it might be some of her pursuer's people. The hound who had scented the pony, well known to him, was in hot pursuit. As she was coming to the edge of the woods, where she could see over the fence into a cleared field, she heard a gruff voice call to the dog, after which he ceased his yelping. She dismounted and stood bewildered, for awhile, not knowing which way to turn. She mused some time on the weirdness of the scene, and of her strange, inevitable fate. She patted the pony on the head and started to mount, she heard a buzzing sound when—hist—across the path a huge rattler jumped and she knew it had struck. She ran a little way, screamed and fell unconscious.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FISHERMAN'S STORY.

An old fisherman and his beautiful daughter, Mollie, were coming home late in the evening of the same day, from baiting their trots. A trot-line as all fisherman know is a line of cord or rope, that reaches from one side of the river bank to the other, and is suspended over deep water and allowed to sink a little beneath the surface. To this line the hooks are attached, two or three feet apart, from one end of the line to the other, by means of stagion or smaller cord, which causes the hooks to stand in deep water. They would set the trot-line in the evening, baiting the hooks with fishing worms, craw-fish, chicken liver and small minnows, returning in the early morning of the next day to go over the line. And many times they would find a great number of nice, fresh fish. They had finished baiting the line, tied their boat to a tree on the bank of the

river, and were on their way to the fisherman's hut, that stood high up on the bank, overlooking the river, when they saw a young and beautiful rider, galloping her brown pony at full speed, on the road leading to the old mill. She had a dark brown shawl wound around her slender form, her hair was flying in the breeze and she looked neither to the right nor left but rode swiftly on.

"I do not understand," said the old fisherman to his daughter. "What does it mean? That 'critter' nor its fair rider, don't belong around here, honey." That evening Mollie pondered on it long, as did her father as he smoked his pipe of clay, and the two sat there silently, one on the steps and the other on a rustic bench. They watched the shadows of the evening draw near, and the river valley was dark already, when they heard a horse's hoof-beat now and then against a stone, as it galloped its way on around the road to the old mill. The old fisherman said he hoped there was no evil a "bodin" near and thought it might a'bin some hunter on his way to "jine" others in the chase. Mollie said she didn't believe it was, for it just sounded so much like the one that they saw and heard

early in the evening. They sat there until it got lighter, but a heavy mist hung over the river. The fisherman, looking up, said "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."

But just as they were going inside the hut, their peace and quietness was broken by a woman's scream. It sounded afar off, at the top of the hill near the woods, though they were sure they heard it. But after that everything seemed still.

The next morning when they went down to go over the trot-line, Victor Coewell and Sambo were standing on the river bank, and the following conversation took place:

"Good morning, Victor, you look so glad and smilin'. You must have had a good night's sleep."

"I never was better, Uncle Jim, and I must have slept at the rate of a mile a minute for the night seemed short. How do our fisher-folk find themselves this big morning?"

"Oh, well enough, I reckon. I put in a bad night though," answered the fisherman. At this Mollie raised her head and smiled, her blue eyes sparkling with merriment, as she said "Was that you making all that fuss last

night, Sambo?" "Lawsy, no. Sambo kep' bery still and lay low after hearin' sich a noise. What did it soun' like? It soun' as if someone was hurtin' all ober er wuz ded er wuz dyin' and I krep off to bed and say let 'em dy in peace." They all laughed but took it more seriously as the old fisherman told the story of the brown pony and its rider and of the other hoof-beats heard some time later. "I reckon no girl was ever fairer and rode beter'n this one. She left a trail o' dust behind, and a feelin' in my heart of evil abodin' in these parts, but may be not," said the fisherman.

Victor then spoke of his staying behind the other hunters and hearing the yelping of a hound, and afterwards seeing a very large greyhound disappear in the thick woods, and hearing a scream that sounded like that of a frightened woman. "It looks very strange, and if I hear any more of it I am liable to investigate somewhat," said Victor.

"Well, come on Moll, with the boat, and we will look our trot-line over. The line hangs low this morning and we may have a good ketch, get in, Victor," said the fisherman. "All right," said Victor, as he climbed into

the boat Mollie rowed up, saying "Sambo, you stay on the shore and if any of the finny tribe swim out, hold them down until we get back." "Dis niggah don't want to see no tribes comin'. One ob dem ghosts or debils am enuf fo' me, and if I sees anything spiritualistic aroun' hyar, I'll hol' my feet down to de groun' and keep 'em agoin' moughty fast fo' home." They were about half-way over the line and had taken off two nice catfish and several white perch. The line kept swaying and going lower all the time as they neared the deepest part of the water. "Git a holt of the trot-line and hold it firm, Victor, for the way she sways there must be a whopper on it," said the fisherman. Mollie held the boat steady and Victor drew up the line and held it firm as he could. The old fisherman was pulling on the stagion that held the hook. "Quick, quick, with the gaff-hook," said the fisherman, as he caught a glimpse of a monstrous fish, but Victor handed the gaff-hook to the fisherman just in time to hear the stagion snap, as though it were a thread, and swish! went the biggest fish they ever saw.

One old fisherman who lived about two miles from there said they had had the same

experience there the year before; they saw the fish a time or two, but it always got away. Others said they had seen it, and it was as long as a man. To the men who fished in that river, it was known as the Coe-fish, but fish, or phantom-fish, it always made good its escape. Old settlers stated they never saw it in that pool after the flood of 1884. Victor told Mollie that it reminded him of the story "The fish I didn't catch." They rowed the boat to the shore, tied it, and returned to their homes.

CHAPTER IX.

NANCY LAKE.

The little log cabin, surrounded with vines and roses, that had been the home of Lisita ever since she could remember, was wrapped in gloom and mystery, when she did not return with the berries as usual. Her aunt, fearing she might have been bitten by a rattlesnake or copperhead, put on her bonnet and walked across the field in search of her. She could see every brier patch in the field, except the one at the top of the hill, near the woods. She knew the berries were the largest and best up there and thought it was just like Lisita to get the nicest, ripest berries, even if it were much farther to carry them home. She soon reached the top of the hill, but did not see anyone, and thinking she might have seen her approaching and hid behind a tree or some bushes (a childish prank Lisita often played), kept looking everywhere. Finally she came to a patch of thick briers by a clump

of bushes and there sat the bucket, full of berries. The briers were broken down around as if someone might have been in a struggle and then a great fear took hold of her lest some wild beast had fought with her. But she did not see any pieces of torn clothes, or blood, and she knew if it had been a bear or panther (of which there were a few in the woods at that time), there would likely have been both, also tracks. She called loudly now, but no answer came, or could come from her who was being borne farther and farther away from her childhood home. Nancy Lake took the berries and went to the house, closed the doors, pulled the latch string in, so that no one could open the door from without, saddled Prince and rode swiftly to a neighbor's house, about a mile away, to give the alarm. And their boy in turn went to another neighbor to tell him the sad news, that Lisita was lost, and by dark a dozen or more were scouring the woods in all directions, with lanterns and torches. They searched for miles in every direction, and nothing could be found that would give any clue, except the fresh track of a horse. They followed it a long distance and lost it again. It was near midnight when

they overtook some hunters on their way home. To them they told their story, which seemed to be a strange one, as nothing of that kind had happened that they could remember, except that one old hunter said he "hearn" some time ago of two boys being treed by a "bar," and the only way they could keep him from climbing the tree too, was by "jobbin" him on the nose with a limb they broke "offen" the tree. But help came in time and they killed the "bar" 'fore the boys give "plum" out.

Another hunter said "Joe, don't you mind when we started acrost that holler, we hearn someone ridin' so fast and fore we got to the rim of the holler, they had crost and gone?" "Well, yes, that's right but that was full ten miles from here, and whoever it might 'a been, they wuz in a hurry sure enough." Some of them thought a little strange of this news, and others thought nothing about it, for it was so far away from there that they had heard it.

The day was beginning to dawn now and far off to the east they could see faint streaks of light, the same faint streaks another beheld, many miles from there. Those who were in the searching party returned to the

home of Nancy Lake to tell her the story of their night's search over hill and vale, over rocks and logs, through thick woods and underbrush, but their search availed little or nothing. She and some of the neighbor women had prepared a steaming hot breakfast for those who were aiding in the search for the lost girl. They ate with that relishing appetite that belongs only to those who take plenty of exercise. They decided that Will Kerr, a poor boy of that neighborhood, who was thirteen years old, should stay with Nancy Lake, and very glad was "Wip" as they called him, to have such a home and plenty to eat at mealtime, without a lot of other "young'ens eatin' it all up," as he put it.

Nancy Lake, a woman forty-three years old, was known as one of the best cooks and housekeepers in the neighborhood, but she seemed slower now under her weight of trouble and always seemed kind and motherly to little "Wip," who was ready and willing at her command. That night as she lay down to sleep, her thoughts flew back to the time when a little pink bundle had been handed to her with a sister's last request that she keep it as her own, and not open the box (which

was tied up with some other things) until Lisita was sixteen years old; then she would understand and know for herself. But gone, as she was, it must always remain a secret. She said she hoped Lisita would come home again some time.

" O missus, she will. She'll cum runnin' in, a smilin'. Yes, when nobody's a lookin fur her. —This bed is so soft and good it feels like I'm in a swimmin'," said " Wip," who was lying in the middle of a feather bed. Before this he had been used to sleeping on straw.

This made Aunt Nancy smile, and she said, " I hope the great God who watches over all, and knows our inmost lives, may search out and hover over the home of Lisita and be her guide, stay and protector." With this she fell asleep and dreamed Lisita was in a foreign land, surrounded with lords and ladies who were enchanted with her beauty.

CHAPTER X.

LISITA'S NEW HOME.

When Lisita awoke she was lying on a kind of trundle bed in a small apartment with walls and ceiling of rock, in which were a large trunk, a rustic stand, some books, an almanac and some pictures pasted on the rock wall, and an old violin hanging from an iron peg that had been drilled into the wall in one corner. The floor was of sand and rock that looked like it had been hewn down on a level with the sand. One odd looking oriental rug, close by the trundle bed, was the only covering on the floor. There was a narrow opening at the left, leading somewhere, covered by bear-skin hanging, and so curious was she to see where it led, that she pulled aside the bear-skin and peered into the dark shadows for some time, when she saw a little flickering light as if a candle were fluttering and striving to burn, in that underground cavern.

She could hear voices too, somewhere, and

a great fear overcame her, as she quietly slipped back to the trundle bed lest they should discover she had been listening. She could not tell whether it was night or day, but thought it was day for she could hear a sound like someone picking against the rock, and the sound of an ax hitting against a tree, as if someone were cutting wood. She dozed off again and dreamed she was back in the vine clad cabin of her Aunt Nancy, spinning threads that looked like gold, while a guardian angel looked on and smiled. She awoke to see the bear-skin hangings pushed aside, and an innocent looking blue-eyed boy, brown with tan, who looked to be about thirteen years of age, came to her bedside with towel and rustic basin (hollowed out of wood) with clear fresh water in it.

"Ye kin wash in this, and wipe on this towel and there's a comb on the stan,' and then Granny'll bring you sumpen t' eat. That rattlesnake cum near gettin' ye and when we found ye we thought hit had when we saw you layin' so close t' it. But hit bit ole Bonnie on the lef' hine leg. Rex, our houn', and Uncle, killed hit and hit had twenty-five rattles an' a button. We air goin' to stuff his hide

with bran an nen ye can see him and he can't bite."

The boy went out, and how delighted she was to see this boy! With him for a companion she felt no harm could come to her. Her reverie was broken when she saw a long, bony hand putting the bear-skin hangings aside and a tall, haggard looking woman appeared with her breakfast on a wooden tray. Her dark eyes stared with a look of wonder, as she said "Whar hev I seed the likes of ye afore, only in the Scotch Highlands? The very pictur of Lady Teasenbery, and I dinna ken, I dinna ken, how it be." The old lady had on a Scotch plaid dress and was clean and neat. She tried to smile as she laid the tray on a split-bottomed chair, with hickory posts.

On a plate was squirrel fried brown, with gravy; apple sauce sweetened with home made sugar; corn pone that had just come from the oven, and sassafras tea to drink. Lisita noticed as she ate the most palatable food, that it was served on dishes edged in blue. She had heard her Aunt Nancy speak of the old willow-ware and she thought of it as she looked at the porcelain plate.

Lisita did not know it now but learned later that it was the real willow pattern which was designed in China from an early Chinese love match and later introduced in England by Thomas Turner of Caughley, about 1780. She thanked the old lady kindly for the meal, saying "It tasted so good. But where am I and how can I find my way out?"

The old lady, who was of Scotch-Irish descent and spoke the Gaelic language with sentences of broken English, shook her head as she picked up the tray of empty dishes, pushed aside the bear-skin hangings and disappeared noiselessly through the dark tunnel. Away back in the narrow, dimly lighted aperture, the following conversation took place:

"Do you think she is the right one?" asked Robert Thompson.

"Na dou', sir. The very likeness of the ancestors and the pictur'," said the old lady.

A great fear again overcame Lisita. She felt sure no harm would come to her from the honest-faced boy and she hoped not from the old lady, but what made her look so haggard and so worn? The strange look in her eyes when she pushed aside the bear-skin hangings and saw her, and the way she spoke

of her looking so much like someone she had known in Scotland, all made it seem more strange and mysterious. She thought again that her mind might be wandering—at least, she could not solve the problem now. She looked at the violin on the rock wall, and wondered who played it. She arose and walked to where it was hanging, removed it from the iron peg and examined it more closely. She peered at the inscription inside of it and spelled out Antonio Stradavarius, Cremona, 1720. She wondered if it was the great violin-maker's name, as she realized it was a very old make of violin. She touched its strings, and as the sweet sounds reached her ear, they seemed to fill her soul with gladness. It seemed a long time since she left her little cabin home, but she knew it had not been many days, and this was early in July. She did not know what time of day it was, but guessed it was near twelve o'clock as the chopping had ceased, as well as the picking against the rock, that she had heard earlier in the day. She walked back to the iron peg in the corner and quietly hung up the old violin, wondering as she did so, why everything was so still.

But just then the bear-skin hangings were pushed aside again. Neither the blue-eyed boy nor the haggard old lady stood there, but an old man with gray hair and beard who started as if to speak, but fell at her feet.

THE OLD HOMESTEAD

CHAPTER XI.

SUNDAY AT COEHERN.

Coehern never looked more peaceful and quiet than it did in the sunshine of this bright August morning. The wheat and oats had been stacked preparatory to threshing. The melons were ripe on the vine, the trees in the orchard were swaying under their load of ripe fruit, while clusters of purple grapes hung from the arbor. Sambo was milking the cows, Rachel preparing chicken for dinner, while Eph busied himself getting horses saddled and the spring wagon and cart in readiness for their trip to Millgrove schoolhouse, which served as a meetinghouse too. Once each month the Circuit Rider would meet with them, and at other times Cornelius Coewell was looked to as class leader. He brought a basket of fresh fruit to the kitchen door and told them all to be ready to start to meeting in a half hour. Victor, in his store clothes, and riding his favorite mare, was al-

ready off in the direction of the fisherman's hut, leading another mare, with a side-saddle. Lucky indeed was the girl who had a friend who would bring an extra horse for her, for in those early days a horse was not considered a bargain unless it would carry double. Mollie was ready and waiting, in her linen dress, home made shoes and straw bonnet but one would not dwell long on the apparel when they saw such laughing, blue eyes, rosy lips and golden hair as belonged to the fisherman's daughter. And deeper yet was the great big heart, full of love and sympathy for everything and everybody. She smiled as Victor gave her the long black riding skirt, which hung two or three feet below her dress, for that was the style, and all ladies who rode horseback, must pull the skirt well down so their clothes would not get soiled, and their feet would not show. The right foot and limb had to be thrown over the horn of the saddle, while the left foot dived into a stirrup hanging from the saddle, that was large enough anyway, for the great toe to fit in.

Victor held the horse while Mollie sprang lithely into the saddle, then mounted the other himself, and graceful indeed did they

look as they rode away, the Coewells following closely behind. Roanne and Cornelius Coewell, together with the old fisherman, were riding in the spring wagon, while Aunt Rachel and Uncle Sambo drove leisurely along in a two-wheeled, cart, drawn by a mule.

They wound slowly around the road leading past the old mill, then by a burying ground to the left of the road, and some houses here and there, after which they came to a beautiful grove (known as Millgrove), in front of which was another burying ground. It was here that the pioneers came from miles around to worship God, to visit, and place wreaths of flowers on the graves of their dead, and to meet with each other. Mollie and Victor were the first to alight. She walked to her mother's grave and placed a rose upon it, saying "Mother sleeps here. I wonder who will put flowers on my grave."

Victor took her hand and led her to the meeting house door, saying "You will not have us put them on your grave yet, will you?" She smiled as she went in and seated herself on a rude bench on the women's side of the house, while Victor sat down on the other side of the aisle. Cornelius Coewell,

with Roanne and the old fisherman, came in, and everybody seemed glad to see everybody else, as they quietly shook hands around.

Everybody semed to be gathered in now, and it was half past ten when Cornelius Coewell walked leisurely to the front, with Bible and hymn book in hand. He outlined the hymn, "Mary to the Saviour's Tomb," in which all took part in singing, after which he read the scripture lesson from Hebrews 11:-13-Ephesians 2:8-19. His theme was "Faith," and the treatment of strangers. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country." "For he looked for a city which hath sure foundations, whose builder and maker is God." "Let brotherly love continue." "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." "For by grace are ye saved through faith and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This lesson sank deep into the hearts of two strangers who were in their midst. Cornelius Coewell then led in prayer and others followed. The season of prayer closed and they sang "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a

believer's ear," the testimony meeting following.

The old fisherman was first to speak. Clad in fisherman's garb, in the humble schoolhouse of sixty years ago, he was supremely happy in a Savior's love as he told them of God's mercy and goodness toward him. "When me hut crumbles in the dust, will have a house not made with hands. And when me ole boat nears the shore, and I lay down me lines and fish-nets for the last time, may I be leanin' firm on His strong arm, to stedy me over the waves, where I'll meet with me loved ones, as well as James and John, the fishermen of auld, who laid down their nets by the Sea of Galilee, to follow the Savior." "Together let us sweetly live" was started by an old man in the back of the house, and as it strains died away, Victor Coewell arose. He told them his aim was to live a wholehearted, christian life, and of the gleam he had caught in the woodland which he felt was for him to follow on and on, till he could wield a great influence for good.

At this a beautiful brown-eyed maiden, (who seemed to be a stranger there) got up. How graceful she looked, in the dew of her

youth, as she told them she was a stranger among them and it is such a consolation to know that God is everywhere. All eyes were turned toward her, and Roanne Coewell shook hands with her, as they sang "On Jordan's stormy banks I stand." The tall, dark-eyed, dignified stranger who was with her, kept his seat but seemed to be moved by the testimonies at times during the meeting for he was looking back to the fireside of other days, to his boyhood home that had so quickly vanished away.

Mollie arose and said she was a child of the King and was glad she started to serve the Lord early in life. Uncle Sambo and Aunt Rachel who were allowed to go to meeting with them some times, as there were not enough slaves in that neighborhood to worship together, spoke as follows: "My deah brudders and sistahs! Dis here meetin' am gettin' so hot dat Sambo can't keep still anoder minnit, and when I knows ob de good Lawd a blessin' me, an' bein' good to me all de way, I jes' get plum spiritualisticated and all de dance leabes dese feet ob mine, and I say 'Swing low, sweet Chariot,' but jes' den dat ole mule I'se adrivin' cut loose and kicked

de front outen my cart wid his hin' parts, den run ahead and I dun plum los' my religion and swore I'd get eben wid dat mule, but he kep' jes' a lil ahead ob us all de way. But I feels now like de Lawd has f'rgiben me, an' I reckon I'll hab to f'rgib dat mule." Smiles went 'round, and then Aunt Rachel arose and said: "Deah breddern and white folks: leaben' Sambo and de mule out, I'se happy in de Lawd. I'se neber bin happier an' I specks to meet yo alls up dere where eberyt'ing is shiny and brite. I'se bin treated bad, I'se bin put upon, I'se bin made to carry burdens an' take sass from dem lazy niggahs, but thank de Lor' I hab bin able to gib dem as good as dey sent." (Here the smiles went 'round again.) "And when we all leabes dis meetin' house fer good I hopes we all meet in a great big meetin' house up dar." Truly Rachel testified as best she knew how to a saving faith in the Atoning Blood and years afterward in her last hours here, the black of face, soul-white negro, once a slave, sang of Canaan's fair land and talked of the "Great Jubilee." She seemed to hear voices which those around her bedside could not hear, as the inaudible

whir of snow-white wings, gently wafted her soul to a home beyond the skies.

After Rachel's testimony many others spoke and Cornelius Coewell closed by speaking of the Lord as his strength and shield and hoped when the Great Reaper gathered in his harvest, he would find no chaff but only the finest of wheat in that congregation. They then sang "Praise God, from Whom all Blessings Flow," the benediction was pronounced, and after talking to, and inviting others to go home with them, the Coewells started on their way home.

As Victor and Mollie neared the old mill, and lingered to watch the sparkling water fall over the dam, they saw a couple on the narrow road across the creek from the old mill-dam, leading up to a narrow path that ran along the slope into the woodland.

"Those are the strangers whom we saw at meeting. They left while we were singing the closing hymn," said Mollie.

When the Coewells reached home they found their dinner of roast chicken, sweet potatoes with gravy, apple pies, honey, cake, coffee, and brown bread baked in an oven, all ready, on the table, but the slaves seemed to

be in an uproar. One said " De debil had bin here shure dis time. He hab long, white ha'r and beard, and he throw up his hands and holler like he wuz plum skeered to def, and I run, and he run. Dat's de las' I seen ob him."

While they ate dinner, they talked of the meeting at Millgrove. Victor said, " Mother, did you see the interesting stranger?"

" Yes," and shook her slender hand.

" I believe there is something strange going on in this neighborhood and if I don't go to school next week, I am going to investigate a little for things are too strange and beautiful," he added with a smile, "to let them alone."

CHAPTER XII.

LISITA'S ABDUCTOR.

Robert Thompson was a descendant of the dark type of Gaelic speaking Celts. He had acquired a good education by travel, and association with the higher type of Scotch, English and Irish. He had been private secretary to some in the ranks of nobility. The last that was known of him in Scotland, he was acting as private secretary to William Henry Alexander, who had inherited vast estates from his grandfather, William Alexander of Revolutionary fame, and who was surveyor General for New York and New Jersey and a lineal descendant of John Alexander, Lord of the Isles, who wedded Margaret, daughter of King Robert second of Scotland. At his death in America, his son, William Henry Alexander, became heir to valuable possessions at home and abroad, and he, with his son, William, Junior, and private secretary, Robert Thompson, spent a great deal of time

in England and Scotland. And after his visit to America, sixteen years before this, he returned with his private secretary, to his estate in England, near the Cheviot Hills, that lie between Scotland and England, leaving his son, William, Junior, in this country. He seemed loath to cross the waters again without his son, who would inherit the lands at his death.

After a voyage of about five weeks they were home again, to the vast estate which was cared for by tenants. The old Manor house had been left in the care of two trusted servants who had everything in readiness for their return. Robert Thompson seemed to take great pains in caring for the business, and indeed, no one else knew of all the great possessions as he did. He knew that William, Junior, from whom they had not heard anything since they parted at New York, would fall heir to all these possessions. He noticed in a year after their return to England that the old gentleman was failing in health. The servants, too, noticed it and spoke to him about it. It was here that a thought entered the mind of Robert Thompson, who had been spending most all his time away from the

old gentleman, often returning at midnight, or after. The servants had had some misgivings about him and wondered where he could be spending so much time late at night, unless at some gambling den. He would go to London and spend several days.

William Henry Alexander had taught violin in his earlier days, but now devoted a great deal of his time to writing books and poems. He had been a very shrewd business man in years past, but had gradually given the business over almost entirely to the management of his private secretary. He often wondered why Robert Thompson was spending so much of his time of late in London and Edinburg. His secretary had dealt honestly with him so far as he knew, and he trusted him to draw on his monthly salary as he needed it. And it was said among Mr. Alexander's relatives, his secretary would likely become heir to the most of his possessions if the real heir was not found. On returning from London late one night, Robert Thompson, instead of retiring, meditated long as he sat by the peat fire; and here temptation entered his mind. He had everything in readiness—records, deeds, will, and only one living heir from

whom they had not heard anything for sixteen years. Robert Thompson yielded to temptation and contrived a scheme to get hold of the wealth of his employer. We will see how it all ends.

As they were seated at the breakfast table next morning, Robert Thompson talked long and earnestly to the old gentleman who seemed to be aging rapidly of late. In July the hottest part of the Summer, he recommended a trip to the Highlands, far to the north, where with a trusty servant, they could stay until early Autumn. The old gentleman studied the situation over and finally consented to go. It was decided that they would have everything in readiness for the trip by the last of July. Joan Campbell was a servant who had been in the employ of Henry Alexander's father a few years before his death, after which she had lived in the home of his son as housekeeper. Robert Thompson chose her as a servant to accompany them on their trip, for he well knew he could trust Joan to do his bidding. The rest of the servants and tenants were left to care for the estate.

A grandson of Joan Campbell's, in whom

she seemed to be greatly interested, was to go along, and Jamie Campbell was in a flurry of excitement at the thought of going to the hills, where they could live in a tent out in the open, or climb to the highest peaks and watch the smoke curl up from the peat fires of the white-washed, clay cottages, in the green valleys

Jamie Campbell, who loved outdoor life, had been wont to roam through the heather and find where the heath hen made her nest in the heather grass on the moor. He knew the well beaten path to the peat bog, where he often gathered the peat moss and turf, to be dried for fuel. He had played on the banks of the Esk, and scattered the heather bloom and wild primroses upon its smiling waters, but now was in ecstacies to think of leaving the well known paths for those that were new, where he could roam at will, chase the wild deer through the woodland, while the stars would smile upon him, as the stock-dove, the lap-wing and the black-bird of the North, whose haunts he would seek, were calling to their mates. Yes, his way would be to the North for a time; then far, far to the West, through the English Channel, across the

broad, blue waters of the Atlantic, where he would find all strange and new, indeed.

As was agreed, all were ready for their trip to the Highlands on the following Monday. On the evening before, after the trunks had been packed, everything in readiness and all had retired for the night except Joan, she stole softly across the sitting-room to an old painting, representing the Stuart Kings, which had hung there for many years. She removed it from the wall, and concealed behind it was a small door that opened into the wall. She pushed a buton and a tiny door slid upward, revealing a pocket in the wall from which she took out a letter, and a picture of some one, and placed them in her trunk. She closed the tiny door, re-hung the painting and went up to where Jamie was asleep in the attic.

"Sleep wall, wee wan, sleep wall. Ye'll be far on the road o'er the braes when the huntsman's in the woods. Ye'll sleep far away, and na, dou', furever. Auld ye'll be when ye see the highlands ag'in, if ever." With this she turned and went to her room.

They were awakened early the next morning by one of the servants who told them

everything was in readiness for their trip. After a light breakfast, William Henry Alexander, wrapped in a heavy coat, stepped out into the gray dawn from the threshold of his home, followed by Robert Thompson, Joan and Jamie Campbell, while the large deerhound trailed along behind. They were driven in a light, covered wagon, while their trunks and baggage were brought by one of the tenants in a heavier wagon. Instead of going very far north, after a day's travel, they went due west, and after dark on the evening of the third day, William Alexander realized he was on the seashore instead of in the Highlands. And as he heard the churl of the waters against the vessel, he was given a glass of wine that made him sleep, and he knew no more until they were far out at sea. He was kept in a room by himself and watched closely by his private secretary, or Joan Campbell. If on waking he made a fuss, he was given more wine, and inquiring passengers were told he was sea-sick. They were eight weeks on this voyage, and landed in New York in October.

They rented a house on the outskirts of the town, in a secluded place where they spent

the winter. The landlord knew they were of Scotch-Irish descent, and he being from Ireland seemed greatly interested in the old gentleman whom they said had come across for a change of climate and scenery that would be good for his mind, which was very bad at times. Early in April they left their little cottage and travelled through to what is now West Virginia, where they are pictured in an earlier chapter, in a lonely cavern, with Lisita in their midst.

CHAPTER XIII.

VICTOR COEWELL FOLLOWS THE GLEAM.

Early one morning in the mild September, Victor Coewell walked down the lane toward the river. He drew a harp from his pocket and played sweet notes as he walked away, that floated back on the still morning air, to his mother's ear. How sweet it sounded to her, as he went farther and farther away, until she could hear it no more. She knew that Victor was going far away, yet she wanted him to go and learn so that he might be able to do his work intelligently and be a successful man in his chosen field, which was the study of medicine. He walked about three miles and arrived in time to catch the first boat down the river. At this time steamboats ran occasionally on this river at "boating stage" but the customary way of travel for "raftsmen" on their return trip to the back counties was on foot, and many "up

river" people often walked to Parkersburg, though some travelled on horseback or in wagons and a few in buggies. The boat reached Parkersburg about dark of the same evening, and some time in the night he took a train for Baltimore, where he was going to study and work with an old and eminent physician by the name of Melvin Brooks. The old physician and Cornelius Coewell had met in their younger days, but had drifted apart, Melvin going out to Maryland with his uncle, where he read and studied medical books and took up the practice of medicine. Experience had taught him much, and one was fortunate indeed, to learn the great medical profession under such an eminent guide.

The arrangements had been made before and the old doctor met Victor at the depot. As they stepped from the platform, a colored man was in waiting, with two thoroughbreds hitched to a cab—in this they were driven to the home of Dr. Brooks, about a mile out of town. The drive was a pleasant one, but short and they soon alighted in front of a well kept cottage, surrounded by trees. The neatness of everything there, appealed to Victor. They were met at the stone steps by a negro

servant, who looked very neat and clean. He bowed politely, as he took the valise and medicine case, then turned and led the way inside. He set down the case and hung up their hats and overcoats, and showed them into the pleasant litle sitting room, where a wood fire was crackling in the little colored grate. They sat by the fire for a few minutes, and the negro servant returned and touched Victor on the arm and led him away to his room, where a wash bowl and towel were ready for use. The negro helped to brush his clothes, as he said, "I'se glad you likes to spruce up, cause dey's moighty proud at dis place, dey am sho.' And Miss Constance do hab some slick looking beaux on her string, yes, sah!"

Victor noticed that their slaves were much better trained and more careful than any he had known before he came to Maryland. Supper was announced and he was shown into the dinning room, where a dainty supper was ready. A dignified looking woman, who wore glasses and looked to be about fifty years of age, was introduced as Madam Brooks. She bowed and introduced her daughter Constance, who also bowed politely, and they all sat down to supper.

Victor was almost tempted to give way to embarrassment for a time, but this overcome, that steel nerve never faltered until he had eaten a hearty meal. Dr. Brooks spoke of Victor's father, who had been a school mate for a few weeks in the old log school house in Hampshire County, now West Virginia, and had drifted farther to the western part of the state, where he met and married the beautiful Roanne Thorpe. He said he visited them shortly after they had gone to housekeeping in Gilmer County, before he went away to Maryland.

Constance looked up and said, "If you learn to doctor with Papa, you will certainly be busy." To which he replied, "I find pleasure in employment."

They arose from the table and the old doctor said, as he looked at Victor, "The same stalwart form of Cornelius, combined with the disposition and graceful manners of his mother."

After supper they sat in the pleasant little sitting room, while Melvin Brooks reviewed many instances of their early school days, telling them of the little old, log school house, with greased paper for window lights, and

split saplings, with the flat side up, for seats. Into the underneath side, so many holes were bored, for the legs they were to stand on. The pupils had to stand for recitation, and studied aloud. They all spelled words together in a sing-song tone. "Grandmother told me when I was a little boy, that when she went to school the teacher would call them to recitation, and spin while they all had to stand with their toes even with a crack in the floor and recited the lesson aloud. Each family was supposed to haul one load of wood for school, and if they failed to do this, their children often went cold." Victor said "Father often speaks of his old school days, too." "Ah, yes, they were good old days," said the doctor, "when we went home to find Mother and the younger ones, around the big, wide, fireplace, that is vacant now. Then we'd put on a big beech or hickory back-log, while the "iron-dogs" held the fore-stick from rolling on the hearth, and the finer wood was piled up high between. The blaze from it lit up our cabin of logs, and made it a center of light and beauty. As the flames burned higher and higher, they made pictures on the walls of memory and seemed to intermingle with the flame of love that

bound us together as one family, when the circle was unbroken. Then we climbed the pegs at the side of the wall, that led to the loft where we slept soundly, with no dreams of loud awakenings, as I hear now, save that of the wild-cat and panther, which we did not fear unless they came too close, and then we built a big fire outside to make them go away. Yes, they were very good old times, but they're gone, sir, and the life I have now is a busy one and full of care."

Victor was very favorably impressed with the old doctor and his family. He hoped the conversation might go on but just then a knock was heard on the door. It was a call for the doctor, who turned to Victor and said, "Are you too tired for a trip?" "No, I will be glad to accompany you."

So, in the year 1859, when the first oil well was started by the laborious springpole method, on the Rathbone tract, near the present site of Burning Springs, now West Virginia, Victor Coewell, from the little Mountain State, who was to be one of the strongest men of the medical profession of that early day, was constantly with the old doctor, out in Maryland, assisting him and learning

many things that were new to him, and in after years he was able to improve on them very much. On the following day he wrote a letter to his mother and told her he would be home for Thanksgiving and the husking-bee, as he wrote he could not keep from thinking of some of the strange happenings that had taken place in and around his own home recently. He wrote "Tell Sambo to keep a close watch out and we will make some investigations when I get home." There were other things beside the mystery of the old mill that he would seek to find out. He closed with this, and turned to see Constance at his side. She told him her father was waiting for him to go to town. He tipped his hat as he left her, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

LISITA'S TEACHER.

Lisita was very much frightened at the old man's sudden appearance, and more so at his strange actions. He seemed to be mumbling over something to himself, as he lay there on the rock floor. As soon as she recovered from the shock he gave her, she took the pitcher of water from the rustic stand and bathed his forehead, also giving him a drink. In a few minutes, with her assistance, he was able to get up and sit in a chair. He was a kind looking old man, with long white beard, and dark brown eyes. He wore a suit of fine, black clothes, and calfskin boots. He reached out a trembling hand for another glass of water which he said was better than the water he had been drinking, as indeed it was, for they had been drugging the water he drank. He looked straight at Lisita and said, "You are young and very beautiful—yes, too beautiful to 'hide your light under a bushel'—

why do you live in this underground cavern, where it is dark and damp, when nature is calling and the glad sunlight is flooding all the hilltops?"

"Oh, I am not going to live here long, I hope, I did not come of my own accord. I was—" She stopped short as the bearskin hangings were quickly thrust aside and Robert Thompson stood before them. He was confused but calmed himself enough to smile at Lisita, and say to the old man, "Why, Father, I did not know you were able to be out of your room." The old man scowled at him as he led him away, and when they had reached a small aperture leading from the main cave, on the opposite side from Lisita's room, he stamped his foot and warned the old man never to let out the secret, and if he did, his bones might be left to bleach in the depths of the cave.

"I am Robert Brown, and you are my father. Do you understand that, old man?"

The old man nodded assent. He had learned to fear Robert Thompson since he had been treated so cruelly at his hands and all he could do now was to obey commands, but down deep in his very life was burning a

great desire for revenge. Robert Thompson turned as he went out, and said "If you will play the part of my father well, it will add much happiness to your life, and if I know you will keep the secret, you can go outside and teach the girl I have here, out of your store of knowledge." The old man nodded again, and Robert Thompson, who was to be called Robert Brown, left him. He went from there to Lisita's room and found her eating dinner. She had just finished eating the ham of a squirrel, but would not eat any more after he came in.

"I do not like to be shut up and waited on. Why don't you let me do something for myself?," asked Lisita.

At this he promised her she could roam at will with his father if she would not tell who she was nor how she came to be there. She asked if she could take his father some dinner.

"You may do this, and after dinner take him for a walk if you like, but remember what I told you, and if we go in company, I am your brother. You see we must be one family, and much depends on how well each one does his part, and if I find anyone is untrue to the

part they play, they will be punished severely."

Just then Jamie brough in a tray with squirrel and gravy, coffee, brown bread and fruit, for Grandpa, as he called him. "Come, and I'll show you the way," he said to Lisita, as she arose and followed him past the bear-skin hangings to the narrow passage outside that led to the main cave, and then through a narrow passage to the old man's room. His room was small, with the same rock wall and floor, but was almost round in shape, with an opening at the farther side. Drawn up close to his bed was an old cedar chest, and at the other side was a small table and a rocking chair. His pipe lay on the table, also a Bible and some other books. There was a wooden tray, with some water in it. He washed, and combed his hair, and was waiting for dinner. He looked at his watch—it was half past twelve.

Lisita was so kind to him, as she spread a cloth and placed everything where it would be convenient for him. He ate heartier than usual and Jamie said "Grandpa, le's go to the woods. Hit'll not be long now till the chestnuts are ripe, and I know where there's

lots of grapes. I'll bring Granny some wood and water, an' we'll all go. I'll show ye the way."

So in about a half hour, Lisita, Grandpa and Jamie were outside the cave, headed for the deepest woods. How nice it was to be in the fresh air and sunshine again! Lisita almost forgot her troubles, while she gathered moss and lichens. Jamie was in an ecstacy of delight to have others with him in the woods, for there was no other place he loved so well. He picked up a small terrapin and carried it along, and when he saw a blacksnake chasing a lizard, he was so much excited over the race that he slipped the terrapin into his linen pocket. He did not think of it for a time, but he remembered it very well when it began to move around. He tried to pull it out but was afraid it might bite him, for he thought they would bite. Jamie ran up to where the old man and Lisita were gathering "turkey berries," overhanging a rock and asked if they thought it would thunder soon. Then he told them the terrapin was moving around in his pocket, and Granny says "if they bite they won't let go till thunder comes." At this the old man handed him

his knife and he severed his pocket, and said: "I'll tell Granny hit didna' git a chance—hit let go wi' me pocket." And the terrapin thus released soon found its way out of the pocket and slowly retraced the ground over which it had been so snugly carried.

The old man seemed to be growing young again, and he laughed heartily at Jamie, who soon forgot his troubles. In a little while they came to a moss covered dell, near where a large grapevine was hanging from a tree, at the edge of a cliff of rocks. Jamie caught hold of this and swung far out over the cliff. Lisita was gathering wild grapes, while the old man was walking along a path which he took to be an old Indian trail. They followed it on and on till they came out into the open, and when they came on higher ground they could see a stream of beautiful, clear water, with a milldam across it. They had left the boy swinging, and followed the trail to the open, while the boy thought they had started home, so he went home.

It was getting late when Jamie returned to the cave and Lisita and the old man were not there. He told Uncle, (as he called Robert Thompson), about it, and Thompson sent him

at once to search for them. It was so dark now one could not see the way and Jamie was fixing to light a torch when he heard voices close by. He was glad indeed to find them on that lonesome hill, and they also were glad to have a light to frighten any wild beasts that might cross their path. As they started to leave the ridge for the lower ground, a mysterious sound came to their ears, from the direction of the old mill.

"Hark—what is that?," said the old man. "Not any beast I ever heard before—something like the cry of a panther, but lower and sadder."

They all looked at each other, and followed the Indian trail to the valley below. The old man seemed to gain strength every day, as he taught Lisita many things, but the lessons on the old violin she liked best. So each day she followed his instructions and was very happy as she sat on the rustic seat in the wildwood, holding the instrument as he had taught her, while its sweet notes died away in the depths of the forest, floating on and on, as if to awaken a response from the very heart of its hidden depths.

THE GRANARY AND INDIAN REST

CHAPTER XV.

SAMBO MAKES A DISCOVERY.

Coehern laid out in all her majestic beauty on this Autumnal day. Some of the trees were wearing bright red coats, while the poplar wore its golden yellow, and the oak a somber hue. The dahlias lifted their velvety heads; and who can say which was the most beautiful—the red, the yellow, the purple, the white, or the variegated? We will leave them there to vie with each other in that bower of beauty, near a cluster of chrysanthemums of white, yellow and purple, that grew by the side of the house.

East of the house, overlooking the river, a large field was being plowed preparatory to sowing wheat. Cornelius Coewell was assisting an old trusty hand at picking and sorting apples, while Eph hauled them in and put them in their proper bins. Others were hulling walnuts under the trees, where they were left to dry before storing away. Sambo

was on his way, driving a long line of heavy oxen to the timberland above the hill-field, where some men were felling trees for cross-ties and sawlogs. The limbs and branches that were too small for ties or logs, were chopped and sawed into the right length for fire-wood. This they would haul home in the evening and store it in the wood-yard where so many cords of wood were piled between stakes. Sambo drove the eight head of oxen leisurely through the fence, that had been laid down for him, and on to where the men were chopping mightily against the sturdy trees.

"Well, I guess you took your time this morning, Sambo. We have enough logs cut to keep you and them oxen busy all week," said one of the wood-choppers.

"Yas, dem oxen do trabble a lil' slow. Yo' see yo' can hurry a hoss, and a man 'ats bin to his neighbor's chicken roost 'll hurry hissef, but dem oxes, dey jes plum hab to go slo' and when yo' doan gib 'em dere time, dey take hit anyhow."

At this he drove up and hitched to a log and started to the roll-away, on a hill overlooking the river, about a quarter of a mile

from where the men were chopping. This he kept up all day and in the evening the men rolled them over the steep hill to the lower ground near the river bank where they left them till the water got high enough to float them out. Sambo was glad when quitting time came, for it was too close to the old mill to suit him, especially in the evening. He had heard one of the wood choppers say a man from Bear Creek told him he had been to town a day or two before and was late getting back, and sat down on the old mill rock (the round flat stone that laid in front of the mill), by the roadside, to rest. He sat there a few minutes admiring the beauty of the moonlight night, when he looked up the road near where a burying ground lies to the left, and saw a man coming toward him. He was walking rapidly and he kept a close watch on him, but just as he was getting close enough to see him plainly, he disappeared.

The man got up from the mill rock and walked to where he saw the man and searched the bushes skirting the road but no trace of him could be found. He went on up the road till he came to a house and asked if they had seen anyone pass by. They said they had

not, nor had not heard their dogs bark that night, as they always did when anyone was approaching, so the traveller must have come from elsewhere. They did not seem to want to investigate any farther, and the man from Bear Creek went on home. But when he reached the top of the hill about a mile from Millgrove, he heard a strange sound that seemed to come from the vicinity of the old mill.

"Fo' de Lor'," said Sambo. "I dun tole dem Co'els da am gost's close and to be ready fo' de wust, cause de Kingdom am a cummin' sho'."

That afternoon the old fisherman came over to help pick apples, bringing Mollie to assist Roanne Coewell at the spinning-wheel. As they walked away to the orchard, the hum of the spinning-wheel could be heard in the house. Soon they stood beneath a large Rome beauty tree, and Cornelius said to the fisherman "We have already picked twenty bushels from this tree;" and the fisherman replied, "You hev made a gude beginning shore. The fruit wuz a hit this year without a doubt."

When they had finished picking the apples on that tree, Cornelius Coewell told the old

fisherman to walk across the meadow with him to the new ground patch of sweet potatoes. He wanted to see if the vines had been cut loose for he was afraid it would frost before he got them dug. They looked over the patch and dug some of them to fill their baskets. The old fisherman said, "Wall, I'll declare! Ye'll hev nigh onto fifty bushel ov them yams if they turn out this guid." The old fisherman and Cornelius Coewell were good friends and as they neared the house they sat down on a little knoll, over from the orchard, while Cornelius told the old fisherman about the strange actions of the slaves who were left to take care of things the Sunday they were at the meeting at Millgrove.

"Why, when we reached home, everything was excitement. They all said they saw an old man with gray hair and beard, who tore his hair and ran off to the woods. I can't help but think strange of it, though I'm not a believer in supernatural things. With some effort we got them quieted down, but some of our slaves won't step outside after dark."

"Wall," said the old fisherman," it is strange, very strange. I wuz dreamin' the other night and I thought the waters were

dryin' up, nor did'nt look clear no more, and a great big fish come out of the water and swallered the land. Cornelius, I believe God sends dreams to his children now, same as ov auld, if they could jest understand the meanin' ov 'em.

"Well, may be we don't walk close enough by His side, to hear the Still Small Voice at all times, that guides us aright," said Mr. Coewell.

"Wall, may be," said the old fisherman, as they arose to go.

When they neared the house again they heard the humming of the spinning wheel and peeped in at the door, to see Mollie busily spinning the thread for Roanne Coewell to weave into cloth for a dress for Mollie, which, dyed with indigo, would be as blue as her laughing eyes. Aunt Rachel's voice could be heard from the kitchen, while the odors of baked ham floated out.

"Come along, yo' lazy niggers, wid dat wood and water, er all dem white trash'll be moanin' case dey's no supper. Hurry along and gib dis colored lady a chance to put dat brown finish on dem taters an' ham an' bread

in de oben." With this she began to sing "Roll on, Chariot."

Just then the wood-choppers were seen coming down through the hill field. Sambo was the last one to get home and was very much excited as he told them he saw a man and a very large hound in the woods. The man was carrying an axe and seemed to be hurrying to the lower ground. Sambo left his oxen in the low gap and walked out along the ridge, where he could see the man running down the hollow, where he disappeared all at once. It was nearly dark when Sambo drove the oxen into the barnyard. He unyoked them, watered and fed them, then took in a load of wood and piled it on the fire. The rest had finished eating supper and were sitting in the room around the fire when Cornelius Coewell looked up and saw a stranger at the door.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LAND DEAL.

The stranger was tall and rather dignified looking, with dark hair and eyes. He was well dressed, and wore high-topped riding boots, Cornelius Coewell arose and walked toward the door, extending a friendly hand to welcome the stranger, for the Coewells were known far and wide for their hospitality, and no stranger ever left their gates without feeling, way down deep in the heart, that this was a real home. The stranger shook hands with Cornelius Coewell, then removed his hat, saying, "My name is Brown," as he entered the door and shook hands with the rest as he was presented to them. The first thought that entered their minds was that he might be a school teacher, and had come to investigate about the Millgrove school.

"My home is in Pennsylvania," he said. "We live near the foot of the Allegheny Mountains. My father used to buy cattle

through this country, and I passed through here in the summer, on the same business. I was going past a school house one Sunday morning, was really tired, having been in the saddle so long, and I alighted and went in. I never regretted it for it was the best meeting I ever was in."

"Well, since you remind me of it, I believe I remember two strangers who came to meeting at Millgrove. A man and a young and beautiful girl," said Roanne Coewell.

" Yes, that was my sister, and she liked the country so well she almost persuaded me to try to buy a piece of land around here. My father is getting old and is not in very good health and we think the change would be good for him. We have a large farm in Pennsylvania, but can sell it at a fair price any time; had a buyer before I left."

The conversation was broken by Roanne Coewell, who invited him to supper.

" Thank you," said the stranger. " I really am very hungry."

He ate rapidly but did not fail to notice the congeniality of that home and the laughing blue eyes of the fisherman's daughter that were turned kindly toward him, as were

those of Roanne Coewell, for they who were true to the right were not loking for treachery in another. As the two women stood there it made him think, for a moment, of his own mother and sister who were far over the ocean, but his thoughts were almost wholly on the scheme he had planned and was most sure it would work for he saw they were favorably impressed iwth him. He felt of his pocket to see if the wallet filled with gold, was still there. Yes, it was there—the very gold that William Alexander had placed in the old cedar chest years ago, across the sea. He felt sure Mr. Alexander meant to give it to his son if he ever returned but now that he has things in his possession, he would use the gold as he pleased. After assuring himself that the gold was in his pocket, he arose and went into the sitting room, studying just how to approach Mr. Coewell on the land deal. When he reached the sitting room he found Mr. Coewell smoking, and as he puffed on his pipe, the smoke from it curled up in wreaths and was drawn toward the chimney and taken up with the flames. So Thompson too drew a chair up close, filled his pipe with tobacco, took a shovel from the cor-

ner and laid a small coal of fire on top of it, and said, as he puffed away on his pipe: "I used to follow school-teaching, but somehow got away from it."

"Well, that is what we thought you were when you came in," said Mrs. Coewell, who had been a teacher in her younger days.

"I wouldn't mind to teach this winter if I could get a piece of land, and a house on it before cold weather. I suppose you would not have any land to sell, say from twenty to fifty acres or more, that you would sell?"

They all liked the stranger's appearance and Cornelius Coewell replied that he might sell fifty acres of that woods land in the hollow toward the old mill. At this the stranger's eyes sparkled for this of all was the very land he wanted most.

"Well, if I build on the lower ground that would make me about a mile and a half from the school house."

"Well, yes, if you build in the Cave hollow, as we used to call it. I haven't been through there for several years. Expect it is thick with underbrush now, though if I remember right, there were some pretty little knolls along the side of a little stream of water.

You'll find plenty of timber suitable to build with, and a small house will do at first, if your family is not too large," said Mr. Coewell.

"Just father, sister, Aunt and her grandson, and myself, are all of us, though we almost count our old grey-hound as one of us," answered the stranger.

"Do you like to hunt? I have a son who is very fond of the chase. He is off studying, and learning to be a doctor," said Mr. Coewell.

This almost gave the stranger a chill for he had not expected to see such advancement in the "backwoods," as he termed it.

"Yes, I too, am very fond of the chase. Are there many deer in the woods now?"

"Yes, a few. It hasn't been very long since I saw some three or four running along at the edge of the woods near the low gap. There are some wild turkeys too, but they are very hard to get."

It was agreed that the stranger would stay all night and they would look over the land in the morning. They retired for the night and as usual, the Coewells were up bright and early. After breakfast Cornelius Coewell and the stranger rode off to look over the

land. The old fisherman saw them as they rode off, and he shook his head and said "Wher' hev I seed that pony? Somewher' I'm shore."

Aunt Rachel stopped and said "De Gud Book tells me I had to watch, as well as pray, an' I'se bin watchin' and dey's bin a prayin', and I specks dey had better bin a watchin' some too, case I doan like no hasty dealin's wid slick talkin' gemmen. Laws a massy, what's dis?"

She picked up a leather wallet and peered in to see it full of shining gold pieces. Roanne Coewell told Sambo to follow them on the hill and see if the man had lost it. He met the stranger coming toward the house as though he was looking for something. Sambo asked if the wallet was his. It pleased the stranger so much that he gave Sambo a gold piece. He went back to where Cornelius Coewell was waiting, and they rode to the top of the hill where they could get a good view of the land. After looking it over Mr. Coewell told the stranger he might have fifty acres in Cave Hollow for five dollars per acre. The stranger paid him ten dollars to bind the bargain, and

as agreed, they met before a Notary on the following day and closed the deal.

That evening the Coewells received a letter from Cecil Cox saying they had arrived in New York and would visit them soon.

CHAPTER XVII.

NO LONGER SQUATTERS.

Robert Thompson, who now went by the name of Brown, was very much elated over the land deal, for who could say the valuable timber lands, the Indian cave, and many other things of great value, were not his own? After the land deal was closed he shook hands with Cornelius Coewell and told him they might erect a temporary cabin on it soon, for they wanted to get moved in before the weather got bad.

"Well, that is with you, sir. Just any time that suits you, and if you let us know, we will assist you at the log-rolling. We are favorably impressed with you, and we hope you will be a benefit to our community," said Mr. Coewell.

"I think we can soon build a small cabin that will do to live in, until we can do better."

"That's just the way to do. Many of the early pioneers came in with hardly anything,

it seems, to do with, yet it was not long until the smoke would curl up from their little cabin, and a clearing would soon be made, where you could see a field of Indian corn growing, with woods all around it."

"Good day," said Robert Thompson, as he mounted the brown pony, and it never made better time but once before and that was when it carried a maiden, wearing a brown shawl, up the road leading past the old mill. He felt he had played his part well so far, and must continue to do so. He soon alighted in front of the cave, handed the bridle reins to Jamie who led the pony away to a shed covered with boughs, while Robert Thompson walked around as though he was really looking for something but he was only looking for a site on which to build a cabin. He walked a little distance from the cave, on the same side of the hollow, and stood on an eminence overloooking, or even with, the ground above the cave. This is the very place, thought he and as he turned to go, he heard the strains of a violin. It sounded like the notes of a bird, and then low and soft like the cooing of a dove. He looked across the hollow, where, seated on a fallen log, Lisita, with bowed

head, was wielding the bow, while William Henry Alexander, with sheet of music before him on two forked sticks, kept time to the music.

"There, that will do. Every note was perfect. I will teach you the 'Fisher's Hornpipe' next lesson."

Lisita got up and started for the cave, plucking here and there a red, yellow or orange leaf to sear over with rosin for a winter bouquet. She looked up over the cave and saw Robert Thompson, who had been watching them for some time. She walked back to where the old man sat on the log with open book in hand and said, "I don't like that man and I wonder why he watches me so closely."

"You must be silent as a mouse, little one. It will all be right some day, I hope."

The old gentleman had an open Bible in hand from which he often read, and told her stories. He taught her grammar as well, and she was learning to use good English by being with one who knew how to speak it correctly.

How beautiful she looks, thought Robert Thompson, while she sat on the ground and looked up into the old man's face, as a child

would look to a father. Her brown hair and eyes shone with a lustrous beauty, and her fair face was aglow with the light of health. Joan Campbell appeared at the entrance of the cave and said, "If ye'd see the garment in its beauty, and if ye'd have a guid fit, ye maun com e now." She spoke of a dress she was making for Lisita, out of a piece of Highland plaid that was brought in the old cedar chest, from across the sea. Lithely she sprang up and like the roe on the mountain, she surmounted every obstacle that lay between her and the cave, so anxious was she to try on that beautiful new dress." As fleet as a deer, and as beautiful as a dove," muttered the old man to himself—"so childlike and yet so womanly. How she reminds me of one I knew long ago."

Robert Thompson, who had been watching them closely, was really getting interested, and in fact was losing all the heart he had. He walked over to where the old man was sitting on the log and showed him the deed for the land, and told him his plans. The old gentleman was pleased to see the deed for the land was made to him, so he heartily agreed to his plans, and why should he not? For was

not life better here, in the stillness of the forest, where nature abounds in its fullness? But what of the Old Manse across the sea? He would like to see it once more, but a voice within whispered, far, far away o'er the ocean wild—no more trips o'er the moors nor to the Highlands, but all is well.

Robert Thompson had walked away a little distance to where the greyhound was barking. He was amused to see Jamie and the dog, who had a bear at bay. The bear had been devouring the carcass of a wild hog which it had killed and was neither in shape for a race or a battle.

"My, hit's a big un. Le's swing him up to the tree. Me an' the houn' can lick him." said Jamie.

"No, take care" said Thompson, "for I want its hide to make a rug."

He picked up an axe with which the boy had been chopping, and hit the bear a heavy blow on the head, When they had made an end of it they went to dinner. Plans were laid at dinner for the new cabin that was to go up at once. Already there had been many trees felled and hewed for he saw he must buy and build, or his secret would soon be out. After

dinner, with the assistance of the ponies, many logs were brought to the level, out from the cave.

"This is all we will 'snake in' this afternoon," and the boy led the ponies away and hitched them to the sled and went to haul in the bear, while Robert Thompson and the old man marked out a foundation and rolled the first logs in place. They were at work by daylight next morning. More logs were hauled and rolled down, and the cabin was going right up. They made it large enough for two rooms, which they planned would serve for dining room and kitchen when they should build a larger house. The boy was busy finding and hauling stones, suitable to fit in the chimney. Some flat stones were found down along the run, for hearth stones, and in a week's time the cabin was completed. They felled a large oak, sawed it into the proper lengths and out of it made clapboards to cover the roof. The smaller limbs were sawed and chopped into the right length to fit the wide fire-place, while the branches were piled up in heaps, preparatory to a clearing they were going to make. A puncheon floor was laid in the cabin, and a fire was built to burn a

day or two in order to take away the dampness, and some bear-skin rugs were laid over the floor.

That evening Robert Thompson went up to cover the fire for the night and as he left the cabin he heard a strange noise. He listened again and again, but could not tell where it came from. First it sounded low and soft like the sighing of the wind, then like some one in distress, and then settled to a low moan that grew fainter and fainter until it died away in the blackness of the night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HALLOWE'EN PARTY.

The home of Doctor Brooks, on this Hollowe'en night was a scene of light and beauty. Mellow lights strung from gate posts, trees, shrubbery, and over the archway that led from the front gate to the little cottage, and many poles had been erected in the backyard for the pumpkin faces to hang upon. These were carved into designs representing familiar faces. One was carved so as to represent the stars, another a half moon, while a very large pumpkin, from which a round piece had been cut out, represented the sun. These, lighted up with candles inside, made various pictures, and altogether, with the goblins dancing about, made a very wierd scene. Constance Brooks, the petted child of fond parents, was the only child left in the home, since the rest were all married and gone. She was a beautiful and talented girl, but selfish insomuch that she thought every one with whom

she associated, must do her bidding, and more than once that day some of the slaves had been lashed for not doing things just to her taste. She walked outside to see if everything was in perfect order, but felt a little restless as she came back into the sitting room and glanced at the clock on the mantle. It was after seven o'clock and the party would begin at eight.

"O, why don't they come," said she. "The guests will soon begin to arrive."

About three miles away, in a home of poverty, Doctor Brooks and Coewell were standing, with a mother, by the bedside of her son, who had "lung" fever, as pneumonia was commonly called then. Doctor Brooks was a very conscientious man, for he realized a life was in the balance, whether rich or poor.

"You may go," he said to Victor. "I will stay until there is a change. After the party you may come back after me.

Victor now remembered his promise to be ready for the party at eight. "If I am needed here, they can get along without me at the Hallowe'en party," said Victor, but he thought he would like to be true to his promise.

"No, no, you must go," said Doctor Brooks, "and return after the party is over."

Thus released, Victor Coewell was soon driving the two thoroughbreds at a rapid pace over the road to the home of Doctor Brooks. He alighted in front of the gate at half past seven, but stopped a minute to look at the great display of lights and faces. One of the servants led the horses away, while another took Victor around to the back door, according to Constance's instructions, where he ate a lunch, then slipped up the back stairs to his room, for the cottage was a story and a half high, with three rooms on the upper floor. His clothes were all laid out. He was to represent Mark Anthony, and Constance would represent Cleopatra. A prize of a hundred dollars had been offered by Doctor Brooks for the best gowned couple there. Just as the clock on the mantle struck eight, Victor appeared under the lights, with Constance on his arm.

"Who is the tall, graceful man under the pink shade, with that perfectly gowned and jeweled lady by his side?" whispered one.

"We have just been wondering who it could be," said another.

Another said she thought it was the Mayor's son, with his fiancee, who was to be present that night. Some were sitting on rustic chairs, others were walking around from place to place, under the mellow lights that cast a glow over the spacious lawn. Finally the games begin. One group came forth near the center of the crowd and danced the dance of the goblins. After they had finished another group appeared in the center, bearing candles upon their heads, and danced the dance of the fire-flies. Then came a little old elf, with some elf maids of dazzling beauty, who joined hands, bowed and danced merrily as they sang of their home on the hill or the wild. (Constance had picked a dozen very small children from the neighborhood and taught them to act as elves). Great applause went up from the crowd at this and another lively tune was struck up on the violin and banjo and others in their turn came forward to the center. Finally the last group came forward but they did little but step to the music. Great cheers went up as the tall, handsome figure and the jeweled lady by his side, bowed to each group, and then to each other.

Mrs. Brooks was with the servants, who were preparing a midnight lunch to be placed on the table erected for that purpose at the other side of the house. Plates were laid for twelve couples and the couple who won the prize was to be seated at the head of the table, with such groups as they chose to eat with them, while the other groups had to wait table. It was nearing midnight when the music and merrymaking came to a sudden stop, as the judges who were to award the prizes, came to the center. The spokesman said:

"We have unanimously decided that the prize of one hundred dollars, which is offered for the most perfect costumes of the persons whom they are representing, will go to the couple under the pink shade, who are posing as Mark Anthony and Cleopatria. You will please unmask and come forward."

After they unmasked and received the prize, everyone else removed their masks and were led to the table. Victor and Constance who were at the head of the table, waiting till all were ready to be seated, were surprised to see a large, dark figure stand between

them, and just as Constance sat down, he at once took the chair by her side.

"I'll show you, Mark Anthony, that I too, have a right by the lady's side. I am Julius Caesar."

"Oh, for Brutus' dagger," thought Coewell, as he caught him by the back of the neck and landed him about three yards away, then seated himself at the head of the table, while his opponent in anger challenged him for a wrestling match, to which he consented after supper was over. And true to their compact when the meal was over the two drew near the center of the ring, Jack Houck coming from one side, wearing the suit in which he represented Julius Caesar, while Victor Coewell dressed as Mark Anthony, came from the other. At the word "Go," from their leader, they made for each other. They wrestled for some time and it looked as though they were evenly matched when around they went, and one or the other must surely be overthrown; but just now one of Anthony's feet was swung in the air but before he went down he regained a good foot-hold and threw himself around Julius Caesar with almost superman strength and Jack Houck, the mighty wrestler, lay flat

on his back, with Victor Coewell on top. Loud applause rang out as Houck's friends led him off and he was not seen again that night.

Victor walked straight to his room and undressed, while the colored man brought the team out, and he was soon on his way back to assist Doctor Brooks. When he reached the bedside again their patient was resting better and the old doctor looked as if a great burden had been lifted from his heart, as he said "The crisis is past, and with the right care he stands a good chance for recovery."

On the way home Victor told the doctor of the party and the wrestling match.

"A bad business. They are a jealous race and he may seek to do you harm. You see he has long sought my daughter's hand and I—"

He did not finish the sentence for some masked men caught the bridle reins, and ordered them to halt.

CHAPTER XIX.

A STRANGER VISITS NANCY LAKE.

Late in the evening of a day in early November, a stranger rode up to Nancy Lake's gate. He alighted just as she and William Kerr, who now lived with her, were coming in from the field where they had been husking corn. They had raised a large field of corn but were late getting it all husked out and were just now finishing up, as they had done all the work themselves. The stranger spoke politely and asked for a night's lodging, to which Nancy replied, "You may stay but we will be late with supper for I have been working in the field. Walk into the house—the boy will take care of your horse."

The stranger removed his leggings and went inside, while the boy led the horse away to the watering-trough, and then to the log stable, where he hitched it in the stall, by old Prince. He filled the manger with hay, then went out to the woodyard and took in some

dry wood, and a bright fire was soon burning on the hearth, while a lighted candle shone from the little stand by the window.

"Hit's a damp and chilly evenin', but the rain yesterday made it good for huskin' corn. How fur did you come, stranger-"

"Oh, about fifty miles today, I guess."

"Golly, you must 'a seen some country, sir. I never bin more'n three or four miles aroun', but I'm jest as happy as I kin be."

"I suppose you like to work, my boy? asked the stranger.

"Well, yes, I reckon so. You see I allus had to, an' at home we never got done workin' but here at Aunt's I get some days off, and kin hunt, and go to meetin' Sundays now, fur I've got a new suit of clothes Aunt made me."

"Did you ever go to school?," asked the stranger.

"No, not yit, but I'm goin' this year. School will start next week and last four months. Aunt says I kin go every day, if I git up early, and work of evenings."

"Well, my boy, if you apply yourself properly, you can yet make a good scholar."

"Yes, I specks so, cause Pa wuz, but he jes'

likes to set aroun' and read now, better'n to work."

"Did you ever hear of Abraham Lincoln, the rail- splitter and debater? He acquired most of his education in the forest, with nothing but a shovel on which to cipher, with charcoal for a pencil, but you see the world must have a work for him to do, and he has prepared himself for that work, whatever it may be. There is talk of his coming out for President next year," said the stranger.

The boy who had gained some new thoughts, went to the kitchen, picked up a bucket and cup, and went out whistling, to where the cow was waiting to be milked. He dragged some fodder around to the cow, then counted out ten ears of corn for each horse. When he had finished milking he carried in another load of wood and laid it in the wood-box, as his Aunt Nancy announced supper. After supper the boy brought out apples and nuts and he and the stranger sat by the big fire while Nancy Lake busied herself in the kitchen. After she had finished her work, she too, sat with them by the fire.

"How long have you lived here, Miss Lake?" asked the stranger.

"All my life, sir. The rest all married and left, so I stayed and took care of my Mother and Father, as long as they lived, and they gave me a deed for this land."

"You are lucky, madam, to have such a good boy with you."

"Yes, it seems so, but I have seen lots of trouble in the last year."

"How so, madam?"

This question seemed to bring the past vividly back and Nancy Lake related to his listening ear, every detail connected with Lisita's disappearance. How she had been left with her when a baby, and she did not know why she was concealed where none could find her.

"Have you no clue, or anything by which you could identify her?," asked the stranger. "Maybe I can assist you as I travel around a good deal."

Twice Nancy Lake started toward the old chest where the little mysterious box lay hidden away in the bottom, covered with other things, but some unseen hand seemed to stop her each time. She turned and said, "I believe Providence will have a hand in restoring my charge. What more can I do than to trust God while I watch and wait?"

The stranger dropped his head lower, as one in an attitude of listening, as the boy "broke in": "I wonder if she's as purty as she used to be when we played Bline Man at Uncle Ike's? 'Course I want her to come back but I don't want to lose my home, but 'course I'd like fur her to come back."

It was getting late when they all retired for the night. The stranger slept in the sitting-room, and the boy and his aunt slept in the two bed-rooms in the back of the house. "Wip," as he was called, covered up the fire and left the little candle burning on the mantel. The stranger blew it out before he retired, and the house was left in darkness. Tired and weary, Nancy Lake slept soundly that night, as did the boy; so soundly that they did not see a searchlight turned toward the old chest, and a man crawling on hands and knees, as still as a mouse, moving in that direction. At last he reached it and raised the heavy old lid carefully, so as not to make any noise. He laid aside each piece of linen and the various old "keepsakes" that had lain for years beneath it's heavy, oaken lid. "This must be it," thought he, as he picked up something that resembled a small box, but when he

unclasped it he saw only a picture of a woman and a tall man. As he turned his searchlight upon it, he could see that the man looked natural—he could not be mistaken in that picture, but who was the woman? He hastily put it in his pocket, and went on with the search for he had not found all for which he was looking. He peered around quietly to see that everything was quiet in the little cabin, then resumed the search. He had almost given it up when he spied something in the far corner, tied up in a red handkerchief. He picked it up and untied it. Inside was a little black box, about four inches square and three inches high. It was made of wood, and colored with coloring made from the bark of trees. He almost trembled now for it seemed that someone was pulling it away from him. But this was only his guilty conscience for he tied it up again and put it in his heavy coat pocket, and went back to bed. He had not been a minute too soon, for just then Nancy Lake stirred, raised up and looked all around, as though she had heard someone. She called to the boy and told him to go to the door, for she had seen a light. The boy walked out in the sitting-room, lit the candle, unbolted the

door and looked around, but did not see or hear anyone. The stranger seemed to be asleep, and the old clock on the mantel struck two. His aunt decided it must have been a dream, so the boy went back to bed. He arose at five o'clock, and raking the coals of fire together, added some kindling wood, and a good supply of the wood he had carried in the night before. He went to the kitchen stove, built a fire, put on the tea-kettle and walked in the sitting-room where a blazing fire rewarded him for his work. His aunt got up and went in the kitchen to get breakfast. The first faint streaks of day were appearing as the boy stepped out, with milk-bucket on his arm. He fed the horse, milked the cow and returned to the little kitchen where breakfast was ready. After breakfast was over, the stranger went on his way, and Nancy Lake and the boy went to the field to finish husking corn. The stranger, when a little way from the house, felt his pocket to see if all was safe. The link of the chain is broken. Who can bind it together?

CHAPTER XX.

THE LOG-ROLLING IN CAVE HOLLOW.

Robert Thompson, William Henry Alexander, Jean and Joan Campbell and Lisita, were now being much talked of in the neighborhood, and were known as the Browns. Robert Thompson had changed his mind somewhat, in regard to his life plans, since he met Lisita. He could not have believed a year ago that he would ever be so contented and happy as he now finds himself in a strange land, surrounded with vast timberland, with here and there, some times a mile or more apart, a house with some cleared land around it. If he could just gain the prize for which he sought "the desert could be made to blossom as the rose." However, he would try, and if not by fair means, it must be by some other. He had only hoped to win a fortune, by concealing the old man until his death, and then all would descend to his son, and if him or his heirs could not be found he would be safe for

everything had been planned and made secure. Deeds and wills had been made, and if another should try to prove anything to the contrary, he would have them in his power. Lisita was very distant toward him and this seemed to make him more anxious to seek her company.

It was agreed that he would teach the Millgrove school that winter. The term was to begin in November and last four months. The people in that neighborhood who had children they wished to send to school, paid the teacher so much tuition for each pupil during the term, as it was supported by local subscription. Under the public school law passed by Virginia in 1846, some counties established and supported free schools, but very few of them did so until after the Civil War.

Reading, arithmetic and writing were about all the branches taught then and Robert Thompson knew that this would be easy for him and would give him a good standing in the neighborhood, so they were trying to get moved, and a larger building completed before school began.

On the following day, with the coming of the dawn, each member of the cave-house was

very busy, and by evening most everything had been moved to the new log cabin on the bluff. Joan Campbell and Lisita were to occupy the back room, and the old gentleman the sitting room, while Robert Thompson and Jamie slept in the cave. The old cedar chest and many other things had been left in the cave until they would have more room. The cave would now serve as a cellar, so it was decided that they must build a larger house. The log-rolling was to be the following Monday and each day the ponies were hitched to the spring-wagon, and the boy hauled in apples, potatoes and pumpkins which had been bought from the people in the neighborhood. The cooking had been done in the cave, with skillet, and lid or oven, but at daylight on Friday morning, Robert Thompson and Jamie were driving along at a good pace toward the nearest village, about six miles away. About dusk of the same evening they arrived in front of the log cabin with a new cook stove and a barrel of flour. The stove was set up and a fire built in it, a little candle burning brightly on the kitchen shelf. The women were proud to be getting everything fixed up so conveniently. There was plenty

of wild game in the woods at that time, and the following morning they were in the woods early and returned with two wild turkeys and two pheasants. That afternoon the boy went after a cow they had bought, and Robert Thompson, with the help of the old man, butchered a small beef. They also dressed their game and hung it out over night.

Although the next day was Sunday, they cooked some of the game, for the Monday they were to have the log-rolling, and people would be there from all the country around. The folks from across the sea had only brought with them such things as they could pack in the old cedar chest, a trunk or two, and a box. Many necessary things had been added to their supply since their arrival in this country, either made by them or purchased from someone else. They travelled by rail from New York to Clarksburg, and bought a covered wagon, drawn by two ponies, from a man who was driving through the country. After buying some supplies they drove through the country, sleeping in the wagon, stopping long enough each day to build a fire and do their own cooking, while the ponies were fed and rested. At last they

came in sight of a grist mill on the bank of a beautiful stream of water, with wooded land for miles to the right.

"Now," said Robert Thompson to Joan, "I will leave all in your care and return when I find a suitable place."

He took a gun with him, and the large deer-hound followed along. He walked for miles and miles through the forest and had almost decided they must drive on farther before they could find a place like he hoped to find. The dog just then seemed to be in hot pursuit of something ,and they were coming nearer. He ran down farther in the hollow, where they must soon cross, and was just in time to shoot a deer as it crossed over to the higher ground. The deer lay close to the top of the cave. He went down farther into the hollow where a ledge of rocks stood out against the hillside. Underneath the ledge was a large sheltered place, an underground passage with walls of solid rock, and other narrow passages leading away in different directions. This he thought must be an Indian cave as it must have been inhabited at some time for there were cross marks and pictures of Indian darts, hatchets and tomahawks drawn

on the rock wall, with slate-rock pencils and red gravel stones. This is the place of all places, thought he; as he looked around he saw that it could be made very comfortable with a little work. So he went outside to where the deerhound was keeping watch over the game, took hold of the deer and dragged it into the cave. He motioned to the dog to lie down, which he did.

Then Robert Thompson hastened back to tell of his wonderful good luck, and evening found them at the cave with the ponies, but the wagon was brought part of the way and concealed in the woods till they could chop away trees and underbrush, so that it was brought next day. It seemed that his plans flourished, and in this God-fearing neighborhood of long ago, the tares were allowed to grow with the wheat, for a time. But what of the harvest?

At four o'clock on Monday, everyone in the little log cabin above the cave, was up and ready for work on the day that would always be remembered by Lisita. After breakfast was over Jamie took a pail and went to milk. Robert Thompson was piling some small logs together outside, where he was going to

build a fire and hang some meat to roast. William Alexander was replenishing the fireplace and stove with wood, Lisita was cleaning up the house and assisting Joan Campbell, who seemed to be trying to get everything on to cook at once. The turkeys had been cooked the day before and put in the pans, ready to be stuffed with dressing, and baked. Pumpkin was being cooked for pies, great pans of apples were ready to be roasted and potatoes were waiting to be peeled. The oven was on the hearth with coals of fire underneath it and on the lid, with bread baking inside.

"I believe we'll have a fair day," said the old gentleman as he looked through the open door to the east where a little light could be seen.

"It seems guid to be up so soon in the mornin'," said Joan Campbell, whose thoughts were wandering far across the sea, for she thought of another morning long ago when Laddie "was there at the first peep o' day," and then of the night when he never returned. Lisita took down the old violin from a peg in the wall and as the music was borne along on the glad morning air, streams of oxen and

men could be seen winding down the hollow. Old men, young and middle aged men were coming, and some women and girls too, so that they might assist with the cooking, and get a look at the new school master, who as they thought would more than likely make a good match for some one of them. One woman brought some apple pies, another some bread, and Roanne Coewell, who came on horseback, brought a basket with some fresh rolls of butter, and a jar of honey. So happy was Lisita that she seemed for a time to forget that she had ever had another home and that she had been stolen away.

When she found the old man alone, she ran in and told him she dreamed last night that so many men were at work and at last there wan one who towered above the rest, and all obeyed his voice though it was low and gentle. A long table was being erected in the yard, while you could hear the woodman's axe at work, and the great trees of the forest that had grown so long undisturbed, in their stalwart beauty, were falling before it. The Druids of the woodland who had long done sentinel duty in that vast stillness, were bowing to the will of man.

The old fisherman and his blue-eyed daughter had just arrived bringing some fish he had secured by means of a fish net. He, together with Cornelius Coewell and William Alexander, were marking off the site for the new house. Sambo was already hauling in logs with the oxen, and some were ready with hand-spikes to roll them in place for the house. Lisita and the fisherman's daughter were spreading cloths and placing dishes on the long table in the yard.

"What pretty dishes you have," said Mollie, when the old willow-ware was placed on the table. "Where did you get them?"

"I don't know," said Lisita. "Aunt can tell you."

They looked up just as the first log was laid in place and saw Robert Thompson coming to where some meat was roasting by a fire. He spoke to Mollie and went on.

"You have a good-looking brother," said Mollie.

"He is not—" Lisita did not finish the sentence for he was at her side.

"It must be Indian Summer," said one of the men, as he looked at the blue haze that surrounded the hills.

"A good day, a good turnout and good-lookin' gals," said another as he looked to where they were placing turkey, beef, fish, pheasants, pies, pudding and cakes on the table. The horn was now blowing for dinner, and the country folk were coming from various directions toward the house. After they were seated around the table on rude benches, one fellow called out—"Tell that brown eyed gal to give us a tune on the fiddle." At this someone handed Lisita the old Stradivarius and William Alexander hauled an old bass viol out of the corner, and as the music rolled out in delightful strains, echoing and re-echoing over hollow and hill, as the feasting went on, and up the narrow path came a stalwart man, riding a sorrel mare.

"Victor!" said Roanne Coewell, as he alighted and kissed his mother, then shook hands with the folks around, but his eyes seemed to be fixed on the slender girl who was wielding the bow. She smiled, as he raised his hat and came nearer, then laughingly reached the bow toward him. He took the bow out of her hands and shook hands with her. Her hand with the violin dropped to her side, and her soul was aglow with a strange enchant-

ment as she saw the one who towered above the rest, and whose voice was low and gentle. Her heart was pierced as if by a dart, and mutual lovelight shone from two pair of eyes.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOUSE-RAISING FINISHED.

Robert Thompson, who stood a little way off, looked on with a jealous eye, for he had never seen Lisita look so beautiful before. Her eyes shone like stars, or as a mirror of the soul that is aflame with pure love. She withdrew her hand, and placed the violin in the corner with the bass viol, then went to assist the other girls in carrying away the plates, and placing clean ones around for those who had not eaten. After dinner, William Alexander and Victor Coewell sat under a large tree and talked, while the women and girls were clearing the table. The two men now got up and walked toward where the new building was going up. Sambo was coming up with his oxen.

"How do you think dese oxen am a lookin', Marse Vick?"

"Straight ahead, sir!," said Victor, as he took the whip from Sambo's hand and with

a quick jerk made a sound which the oxen understood, as they quickened their pace toward another log, waiting to be hauled in.

"You see, Mr. Coewell, we are putting the chimney in the center of the building, so we can have a fire in both rooms down stairs as well as up stairs," said William Alexander.

"I see. I like that, but it will take lots of wood. Sambo can bring the oxen over and help you haul in wood to-morrow," said Victor." "After school begins your son will not have much time."

"My son!" said William Alexander, and stopped short as if somethiing hurt him. "Yes, busy indeed, sir."

The house was going right up. Two men were lifting and tugging at one end of a heavy log, but failed to get it to the right place. A man who arrived late in the day, hauling a keg of cider on a sled drawn by a yoke of oxen, called out that he would give the keg of cider to any man who would lift one end of the log in place. First one tried it then another. Finally they called on the school teacher.

"He seems to be a very wiry little man," said Cornelius Coewell, as he lifted, twisted

and tugged at the log that was too heavy for him.

"I give it up," said he, as a dozen or more voices rang out in a chorus, "Come on, Victor, you can lift her!"

Victor was a little slow to start, but felt that he must either succeed or fail. The girls and women were watching now, and he knew that every eye was turned toward him, as he took hold of the log and lifted it in place. "Hurrah, for Coewell," rang out through the forest, as he took the keg of cider to the women and told the men they were to drink just as much as the women handed out. One dark face wore a scowl, as he lifted the log in place, and a jealous eye followed him, as he led Lisita to where his horses were saddled. He untied the horses and placed her in one saddle and hastily sprang into the other, then they were off down the narrow path leading to the old mill. Robert Thompson was playing a part, but for a moment was at sea to know just what to do. However, this must not go on as all his plans would be overthrown. So quick as a thought almost, he told Jamie to saddle the ponies and bring them around. Seeing it would not look well to follow alone,

he asked Mollie to go with him, and they too, soon disappeared down the narrow path.

"Wall, young folks air funny folks," said the old fisherman as they rode out of sight. "I wuz young once, and a merry day we had when me Bonnie and me gathered heathbloom and primroses and strayed o'er the moor. But the day is about over and nicht is drawing nigh."

William Alexander raised his head at this speech and sat like one in a dream, for quick as a thought he seemed to be in the old Manor house, with vast estates around him; once more he was walking over the moor or hunting in the Highlands. Once again he heard the shrill notes of the bagpipe. But his reverie was broken when Cornelius Coewell placed a hand on his shoulder and asked him to come and see if the chimney was wide enough. The logs were about all in place, and they would soon be ready for the rafters. It was four o'clock and when the ridge-pole was put in place, they christened it Cave-pole, then the women folk started to prepare supper.

Victor and Lisita soon came to the old mill and stopped their horses to watch the water

as it fell over the stones and sparkled in the sunlight like so many jewels, while Victor told her of many strange things that he had heard about a mysterious, dark-robed maiden who walked there all alone.

"If you will consent to come with us some moonlight night (for then is when it walks), we will see if it is true."

"I think I will come, but will tell you sure before long."

At this they rode on to Millgrove and across the hill to where they could look down on the home of the Coewells, lying at the foot of some gently sloping hills, with a large, clear stream of water flowing slowly on. "How beautiful!" exclaimed Lisita. "That is our home," said Victor. "I have been away this Fall, out in Maryland with an old friend of my Father's, who is a doctor and that is my chosen profession so I have been reading medical books and working under him. I just returned home today. I got a letter from Mother last week, telling me of the land deal and of the log-rolling."

"Oh, how nice," said Lisita, "but I am afraid of doctors."

"Why so, little girl? They are your best friends, especially when you are sick."

She modestly returned his ardent gaze, and they were off again, over the hill and through the woodland, on their way to Cave Hollow, which now seemed so dear to Lisita. They arrived just as the folks were sitting down to supper. Sambo led the horses away, and when they went in the house, Victor took up the old violin and handed it to Lisita, while the old gentleman sat close by with the bass viol and the music again rang out sweet and clear until the whole forest seemed to catch the spirit of merrymaking.

Robert Thompson, who was riding with the fisherman's daughter, had hoped to overtake the others and all ride along together, but just before they came in sight of the old mill, the other couple had left and were far on the road in the direction of Millgrove. Mollie had no thought of evil in her heart, but was merely riding for sport beside the well respected school-teacher, Mr. Brown. She thought he seemed a little impatient when they reached the old mill, as indeed he was, for he could not tell which way to go. Finally he said, "Let us cross the ford and follow

the road that leads up from the creek on the other side." No sooner had he spoken than they were on their way. As they followed the road across from the mill, he thought of the Sunday when another rode by his side, and how he had crossed over and taken that road to mislead those who saw them, for their habitation in cave-hollow must not then be known. He asked Mollie many questions in regard to the Coewells as they rode along, and she told him how they had given her father the little cabin on the bluff overlooking the river, when he found his way there many years ago with her mother. Her mother and father had lived in Scotland and when her mother's people objected to the marriage, they were secretly married and took a ship for the States. "Father told me about it. He said she seemed satisfied here for awhile but he believed she longed for her native land again. She did not complain though her health was failing fast and she soon fell asleep. They buried her at Millgrove. I can just remember seeing her, and that is all."

Robert Thompson had almost forgotten the mission on which he started, and was all attention now. Perhaps after all his plans he

would be found out. What part of Scotland did your father come from? From the Lowlands, or Southeastern part "I think the town was Selkirk—Father can tell you all about it, if you ask him.

"How old is this young Coewell?" he inuired.

"About nineteen years old. He is two years older than I am. We played together when we were little. I have known him all my life and feel indebted toward him for his many acts of kindness toward us. The Coewells are our best friends."

Robert Thompson now called to mind the tall, red, blond type of Lowlanders, in which was a strain of Teutonic blood. He thought the old fisherman resembled this type of Scotchman when he first met him, on the evening of the land deal. He turned and looked into the face of the innocent girl who cherished no evil in her heart. The wrongdoer himself respects the pure, the good, the true.

"Well, let us be off, or we will miss our supper," said he.

They soon come in sight of the old mill again and Mollie was almost sure she saw a large stone that lay below it, move as if some-

thing beneath was pushing at it. "Look," said Mollie, but he did not see anything and did not believe she had. They rode on and arrived just as Victor was eating supper. He too, sat down at the table and the two talked about their plans. After supper they went out and looked at the new house, which was all done to the roof.

"Why not have a party tonight? said Victor.

"You will have to ask the old gentleman," said Thompson, who did not want to have the party at all and felt sure the old man would veto it. but he was mistaken for when Victor Coewell approached him in his usual friendly and genteel maner, the old man smiled and said: "I don't hardly know." He turned to Lisita, who looked like a pink rose, blushing in the sunlight and said; "What do you say?"

"Oh, please let us. We will place candles on the wall and christen the new floor."

"With our heels," added Victor.

The old man assented, for when Victor Coewell approached him he thought of his own son who had left him many years ago.

Lisita and Mollie hastened off to tell the others, for they were all getting ready to go

home. It was agreed that the young folks could all stay awhile, and the older folks went home. Jamie built a fire in the new house, and the girls placed candles on the wall. Robert Thompson was talking with Joan Campbell, but was too late to stop it. The old melodian which had been hidden in the cave house so long, was brought out. Thompson played it, Lisita the old violin and William Alexander the bass viol. The glad strains that floated to the ears of the listeners, awakened emotions that did not die without a response. They chose partners and played games. Lisita lay down the violin to go with Victor who had chosen her for his partner. They played until all were tired and the party broke up. Victor noticed that Lisita seemed to stay close to the old gentleman most of the time. Before he left he invited them over, and told Lisita he would never forget the day of the log-rolling in Cave Hollow. He saw Thompson was watching him closely as he lingered to say "Good night" to Lisita, and he was soon off on the path that led to the fisherman's hut on the bluff, carrying a torch, Mollie and her father following the light. When they reached the top of the hill a little way from the house,

they thought they heard someone calling for help. They listened again and again but heard no sound and returned to their homes.

CHAPTER XXII.

GUESTS AT COEWELLS.

On the night of the Hallowe-en party at the home of Melvin Brooks, the doctor and Victor Coewell were returning from the bedside of their patient. It was an unusual happening to hear a voice cry out in the night. "Halt." For many years Dr. Brooks had made his rounds, travelling the well-known roads at all hours of the night unmolested. And had it not been for the quick action of Coewell, who knows what might have happened? But he instantly tightened the reins and gave the horses a lash with the whip so that they jerked loose and dashed past the masked men so suddenly that it threw one of them on the ground. They heard a pistol shot, but they were out of danger and would soon be home. They never knew whether it was someone trying to rob the doctor, or Jack Houck seeking revenge on Coewell for

happenings at the Hallowe'en party, but they rather thought it was the latter.

The time was drawing near for Victor to return home. He was sorry to leave the old doctor, who had taken so much pains with him and offered him so much per month if he would stay throught the winter. But he got the letter from his mother telling of the land deal and the log-rolling—of the "interesting stranger" who was a visitor at the meeting at Millgrove schoolhouse and had come to be one of their neighbors, and her brother was going to teach their school this winter. What a chapter of news! He gave a low whistle, looked up and smiled, as he read this. Yes, he had not forgotten the dark-eyed maiden and thoughts of her often crossed his mind, like a vague shadow or dream. No, he had not forgotten the first impression she made on him and he hoped to know her better before long. It was agreed that he leave on the following Saturday night and return again in the Spring.

Constance prepared for him a nice lunch and she and her father accompanied him to the depot. "The best of luck to you, Coewell!

Remember me on the coming winter nights when perhaps you will fare better."

"The same to you, Dr. Brooks, and don't work too hard. I will return and help you out next Spring, if nothing prevents. Good bye," said Coewell, as he shook hands with them and started for the train that would soon pull out.

"Don't forget your promise," said Constance, as he tipped his hat, and in a moment was out of sight.

He arrived at Parkersburg the next afternoon, and was soon on his way up the river on a boat. He reached home Monday morning, soon after the folks had started to the log-rolling, so what could he do but follow?

Dr. Brooks and his daughter returned home and the doctor told her his practice among the "younger set" seemed to be picking up of late and he believed it would pay him to keep a younger man with him in the office.

"Why not Coewell?" said Constance, who missed the stalwart form of the man who had been in their home for the past two months and who had been such a true friend to her father.

On the morning after the log-rolling in Cave Hollow Victor mounted his favorite mare and started to town — a village of a few inhabitants, two stores, a postoffice and a school house. The morning was a little chilly but everything seemed beautiful to him. The sun in its glorious splendor, was rising o'er the hilltops and flooding all the land with warmth and beauty. When he came in sight of the river he thought the water never looked so clear and laughing before. The air never seemed so pure and bracing, the towering trees by the roadside never seemed so majestic. The hawk that sailed above the treetops seemed to move or float along so easily, and the music of the bells from the field was low and sweet. Had everything really changed? No, but the eyes and ears were seeing and hearing from the heart and soul of the inner man, that had been awakened by love and was walking on a higher plane, a plane where only pure manhood and womanhood can dwell. And what love is greater save our love to God and God's love to His children? He arrived at the postoffice about ten o'clock and received a letter stating that Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Cox would land at

the little town that afternoon, and would like for someone to meet them as they were entire strangers in that country. Victor was soon on his way home and arrived in time for dinner. Sambo was called to hitch up the spring wagon and go to town to meet them.

"Well, ob all da's, dis am de wo'stest fo' dem Coxes to cum, for I dun bin haulin' punkins and yams, and I specks to put dem Coxes to de greates' speed dese hosses am capable ob."

"You must treat them kindly, for they are very genteel people," said Roanne Coewell.

Sambo was soon on the road leading to the river, and on up to the field where he crossed. He reached the boat landing about three o'clock, just as the boat whistled for the landing. He saw a low, heavy-set man, and a tall dark-eyed woman get off. He walked up and said "Ef you is de aristocrats dat am goin' to Marse Coe'ells, clime in dis omnibus, on de hinmost seat, in a hurry case I wants to git yo' alls dar fo it frosts." They looked somewhat surprised, but took the back seat. "Yo' alls must a cum to stay," said Sambo, after he lifted a heavy trunk and two traveling bags into the wagon.

"Well, for a time I suppose," said Mr. Cox.

As they drove along toward Coewells, Cecil Cox took a map out of the travelling bag and was eyeing it closely. "The very stream of water Will told us about fishing in one time," said Mr. Cox, when they came in sight of the river, whose visit to this country was to find relatives and missing heirs. Great preparations were being made at Coewells for the coming guests. Along about five o'clock Sambo drove up with the dignified looking couple. Victor Coewell helped them to alight and led them into the large sitting room where a wood fire burned in the wide fire-place. Cornelius and Roanne Coewell came forward and shook hands with them.

"Make yourselves at home," said Cornelius; and Roanne told them she would have the servants to take their trunk and travelling bags up stairs.

"Thank you," said the guests. "I am sure we will enjoy such hospitality as this."

As the kitchen door was opened to announce supper, the odors of the savory meal floated in. Mrs. Cox put down her smelling salts, and they all went out to supper. They were surprised when Mr. Cox asked for some

raw eggs, beaten up in a glass. These were prepared and after he drank them he ate a hearty supper. After supper was over, they sat around the fire-place and had a long talk. Cecil Cox was the first speaker.

"We have often talked of a trip to America, and now that some of our relatives are missing, who cannot be found in Scotland, and their property may fall into the hands of stragers if we do not find them, we thought we must come now, as we had a mission to come on, as well as a pleasure trip."

"You do not think they could be in this section, do you?" said Cornelius Coewell.

"My brother-in-law had vast estates in Scotland, but all at once he was missing. He visited this country several years ago, and his son stayed in this country. In the last few years his health seemed to be failing. We did not visit each other often. One day I visited the old house and found no one there but a servant or two. Everything seemed to be going down and all the information I could get was that he had gone North. That was last fall and I knew if that were true, he would have returned in a few months."

"Perhaps he has been foully dealt with," said Cornelius Coewell.

"Yes, or we thought he might have had a longing to see his son again, and have come to this country to search for him."

"Would he not have let you know it, if he were planning a trip?"

"I think he would, sir, but wherever he is, his private secretary is with him, also an old servant, a Scotch-woman who has been with them for years. Word came to us some years ago that his son William had been killed in a wrestling match, or received injuries from which he died, leaving a daughter about a year old, but whether it is true, and who he married, I never knew."

"It is very strange," said Cornelius Coewell. What was his occupation?"

"He never worked much, but was a good scholar and musician; very trusty in his dealings. From my map I think it is forty or fifty miles from here to where his son was the last time they heard from him, sixteen or seventeen years ago."

"Well, we will be glad to assist you in any way we can," said Cornelius Coewell.

"Another thing I am in this country for is

to look at some holdings in and around New York City, which is known as the Peter Noe Estate, and by rights it will descend to the Coxes some future time."

But alas! it never did, for about twenty-five years later the heirs were called together to sign a paper for one who posed as their attorney and later it was turned over to a man in New Jersey, who died very suddenly, and they lost track of it.

"Do you have a family?" asked Cornelius Coewell.

"Yes, but they are married and in homes of their own. I had a brother that settled in this country some years ago, too, but I lost all trace of him after he crossed the mountains."

Apples were brought in and passed around and while they were eating them, the conversation drifted to the old mill, the mill that had been built in Cornelius Coewell's father's time. Just then one of the slaves came running in and said he saw a man running toward the big gate. They went out and looked around in every direction but saw no trace of anyone. They saddled horses, and Victor with his hounds following, rode to the low-

gap. Once in awhile the dogs would act like they scented something, then all at once they would stop. Some of the dogs seemed determined to go into Cave Hollow but Victor called them back, and after they had reached home, he searched all the out-buildings but could not find any trace of their visitor.

"Probably someone out to 'borrow' from his neighbor," said Victor to his father, who was still up when he returned.

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," said Cornelius Coewell.

Sambo, who heard Mr. Coewell's reply to his son, said "Dat am so, Marse Co'ell. We don' need to worry case dar'll be enuf ebil done each day."

After Victor went to bed, he felt uneasy about the folks in Cave Hollow lest some one might be going there to do them harm but he soon dismissed this idea for he was not sure the dogs were on the right trail.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TAVERN BY THE WAYSIDE.

The following Monday the Coxes set out for a twenty-five mile journey, in search of relatives.

"The team is at your disposal," said Cornelius Coewell. "All I ask is for you to feed, water and care for them as your own.

"Thank you, sir, I will do that, and if nothing prevents we shall return after a time," said Mr. Cox.

Cornelius Coewell walked back to the house and into the kitchen where Roanne and Aunt Rachel were peeling apples.

"Some of our apples are beginning to rot," said Mrs. Coewell, "and we can save them by drying and making another kettle of apple butter."

"Why not have an apple-cutting?," said Victor, who had just come down stairs.

"Well, we might," said his mother. "But

you see we are going to have the husking-bee this week.

"That's right, mother. We would all forget if it were not for you. But then you think one kissing party will be enough, do you?"

"Laws a massy! Dem playin' parties am a big piece ob foolishness anyhow, and 'gin you clean after a bunch of dem frolickin' white trash, why yo haint got much ahead," said Rachel who was always allowed to speak her sentiments on acount of her age, and her long years of servitude in the families of the Coewells.

"Only pleasant memories," returned Victor. "Did you ever dance, Aunt Rachel?"

"Lawsy, yes. Dem wuz good ole times when my feet worked on springs, and few niggers cud 'cut de pigeon wing' as did dis lady, an' when I hears de ole' banjo agin it brings back dem good ole days when we wuz spry, and when ol' Marse Coewell laughed at our hoe-downs."

"Well, I assure you we will have good music," said Victor, as he started to go. "What day will it be, Mother?"

"Your Pa told the people at mill last Fri-

day that we would have the husking-bee Wednesday, and I think most all the neighbors know it."

"Very well, it will be Wednesday," said Victor, as he walked toward his favorite mare, which was saddled and waiting. He rode swiftly across the field, then up to the wooded land near the low gap where the old fisherman was gathering material of slender hickory withes to make chairs. He stopped to talk a few minutes, then rode on through the low-gap and took the narrow road leading into Cave Hollow. He had not gone far on this narrow road when the animal he was riding stopped short, wheeled to one side of the road, spread its nostrils and snorted. Victor looked all around but failed to see anything, and finally urged the animal to go on: a little farther down he stopped suddenly for the sweet notes of a violin floated to his listening ear. Reverently he listened, and wished that he could hear it always. What if he could never hear it again, nor see the slender form of the girl he loved? How dark this old world would be if it were so. He listened again and heard low, plaintive notes floating to him in the stillness of the forest. He rode

on to where he could see Lisita seated on a log and the old gentleman near by. They did not see him but he could hear them talking. He could have heard every word they said but would not listen for they did not know he was there. He turned and rode away a little distance. Behind a clump of trees a man had stood in waiting for some time, so that he might catch every word that was said by the couple on the log, for if there were any new plans he must know them. His hiding place served a double purpose—he heard the conversation of the two who thought he was in town ,and could also see the great interest and attention of the man on the sorrel mare when he heard Lisita playing the violin, and with jealous eyes he watched the stalwart, manly figure on horseback.

After Victor had ridden a sufficient distance away so that they could finish their conversation without any interruptions (for he felt sure they were talking of important matters by their actions and the old man's gestures), he stopped and took a survey of the surroundings. On this quiet morning in late November the stillness of the forest filled him with a longing to explore its hidden

depths, and the litle rivulet that laughed, danced and played as it flowed merrily along by the narrow pathway, whispered to him of love's dream. He rode on farther and stopped to look in the direction of the old mill. He was not far from the road that wound 'round to the mill, when he saw a stranger walking toward the mill. The stranger was dressed shabbily and carried a little bundle tied up in a red handkerchief, swung across his shoulder on a stick.

Victor turned back toward Cave Hollow. The old gentleman and Lisita were already going toward the house. He soon overtook them, alighted and shook hands with them, and asked if either of them would ride. With a little persuasion the old gentleman consented to ride, while the happy couple walked slowly behind.

"Let me carry your fiddle," said Victor.

"Oh, I almost forgot I had it," said Lisita.

"And what makes you so forgetful," said Victor, as he added, "I might forget the violin, but I shall never forget the one who plays it."

A smile was the only answer that Lisita gave, and they soon reached the house that

looked like a mansion in those early days. The old lady never talked much, but welcomed them with a "Guid mornin'" and a nod of the head. The boy, with a twinkle in his eye, said to Victor, as he led the horse away "I spose you wouldn't keer if a feller'd take a ride?"

"Not in the least, sir. Help yourself, but be careful for she scares sometimes."

The old man seemed to be busying himself with the wood and fires, so Lisita and Victor were left in the sitting room. As they talked, ate apples and chestnuts, they did not know of the great efforts another was making to hear their conversation, and they often looked back on it as one of their happiest days. Victor stayed until evening, invited them to the husking-bee, then started for home.

The Coxes drove along at a slow pace and covered eight or ten miles by noon. They stopped at a farm house for dinner and to have their horses fed. After resting awhile, they continued on their journey. Along late in the evening they came to a tavern by the roadside, near the line where the counties of Roane and Calhoun join.

"We had better see if we can get lodging

here, for there may not be another tavern within twenty miles of this one," said Cecil Cox to his wife.

"Yes, you are right, Cecil, and I am tired and hungry, as well as our horses," said Mrs. Cox, and she held the lines while he crossed the road and knocked on the door with latch string out.

"Come in, come in," said a good-natured voice, and Cecil Cox pulled the latch string, and with a polite air raised his hat and peered into the pleasant little sittingroom. The little fat man on the stool hastily got up and came forward when he saw the guest was dressed better than the ordinary traveller.

"Can we get a night's lodging here?" said Mr. Cox.

"Yes, sir. Yes, indeed. Walk right in. Are you alone?"

"No, sir. My wife is with me, and we have a team."

"Will she need any help to alight?" asked the little, fat landlord.

"Yes, you may bring a chair for her to step out on."

A home-made chair, with split hickory bottom, was placed at the side of the high, old

spring wagon, and Mrs. Cox stepped out and was soon in the sittingroom of the tavern, by a blazing, log fire, while Mr. Cox, true to his word, followed off to the log stable across the road, to see that his team was well cared for. Twe other strangers stopped for lodging at the tavern that night. They were interested in the oil well that was then being drilled on the Rathbone tract, at a place that was later called Burning Springs, deriving its name from two bubbling springs that would burn if lit by a match.

At supper Mr. Cox told them he had relatives in that section somewhere, but had lost trace of them for his brother left Scotland several years ago. Also that a brother-in-law who lived in the same country, had become missing. "From the Captain of the ship, who is a friend of mine, I learned that someone filling his description, had come across to this country about a year ago. It's my opinion that he is searching for his son who stayed in this country when they visited it years ago."

"What might his name be?" asked one of the strangers.

"Alexander, sir. William Henry Alexander. His son's name is William also."

Then the stranger who had traveled through the country a great deal on horseback (for he was a cattle buyer) told of meeting some people driving through the country in a covered wagon drawn by two ponies.

"In what section of the country did you meet them?"

"Well, I would say about half way between Clarksburg and Parkersburg, but they turned to the left and were going toward the Hughes River. It was near a little stream of water called Bone Creek."

"There is no doubt in my mind that these are the very ones for whom we are searching. Did you see the occupants of the wagon?"

"Only a tall man, with dark complexion, and a boy on the front seat. If there were others I did not see them."

The strangers also told him of a family of Coxes that lived in Gilmer County. He had stayed all night with them once when he was buying cattle in that section. After supper the stranger and Mr. Cox looked over a map of Virginia, as the States were called then, and he located the vicinity of the Coxes with

whom he had stopped, also the place he met the covered wagon, as near as he could, and Mr. Cox marked each place with a dot of red ink. This was news indeed, for he felt that he had at last gotten a clew.

"Perhaps we had better stay here a few days," said Mr. Cox to his wife. "May be we can learn more than we wish to know."

So it was agreed that they remain at the inn for a few days and the little fat landlord chuckled in his usual, goodnatured way for he knew their stay at the tavern would help to fill his sack, (which he kept under the floor where a board was loose) with shining gold, as well as fill his mind with the happenings of the day. A red dot was already placed on his map to indicate the home of the Coewells and he could tell to a certainty on account of the bend of the river. Another red dot was placed on the map for the tavern, that was also close by a small stream of water. From these red dots between which he knew the distance, he could reckon other distances, for his map did not give the scale of miles. So he reckoned the distance from the home of the Coewells to the other two dots as being about seventy or eighty miles apart. On the eve-

ning before they left the tavern another stranger sought lodging. His dress was shabby, and he carried a bundle tied up in a red handkerchief, thrown over his shoulder on a stick. He resembled a tramp in dress, and when they were alone Cecil Cox stood amazed when the traveller removed his glasses and a wig, for before him was a familiar face.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCHOOL BEGINS AT MILLGROVE.

On the Monday before Thanksgiving, children for miles around were on their way to Millgrove. Parents accompanied some of the younger ones, others walked swiftly along following after a large dog that ran along in front, for catamounts sometimes lurked near the pathway. The scream of the panther could be heard at nightfall and a bear might be seen occasionally. By eight o'clock the playground in front of the log schoolhouse was a scene of merriment, and the woods around were alive with the echoes of their joyous shouts. Some of the older boys had built a roaring wood fire in the stove, while others swept the floor and a bucket of fresh water had been brought from the spring by the roadside.

When the teacher arrived accompanied by Jamie Campbell, Lisita and Mollie everything was in readiness for him. Robert

Thompson stopped short and took a look at his pupils. From the smallest to the largest (and there were at least thirty in all) every one was looking straight at him. There were not very many families in the neighborhood at that time but each family had from three to six children old enough to go to school. He looked out over the playground in front of the school house and from the size of the children he guessed their ages would run from seven to eighteen years. He looked at his watch, then walked into the schoolroom, laid a small dictionary on a chair that was up in front of the seats, picked up a stick that lay on the floor, went to the door, and with quick and heavy strokes against the logs, made a sound which called the happy children from their play, and "books" were then taken up. The teacher took a chair in front of the seats (which were so high that the feet of the smaller children could not touch the floor, in fact, the same kind of seats are used in some parts of Tennessee Mountains today) and began to look his pupils over. One little fellow called out, "Say, Mister, when Miss Rider teached us she said the Lord's Prayer as soon as we jumped our benches." This made the teacher

frown, and Lisita, who was not afraid, arose and with the help of Mollie and others, repeated the Lord's Prayer. So here was a good beginning, if only from the pupils.

At this the teacher got up and proceeded to lay down a number of hard and fact rules, instead of saying with a smile, "Do right, is my motto, and those who can't do right, please do as near right as you can, for I trust you will all work with me to advance morals, education, truth and righteousness that go hand in hand to make the citizenship of our great country." After he laid down the rules he told them to turn to the first lesson in their readers and spellers. The new beginners were called and recited the A, B, C's. Another class was called, to recite and they spelled a few words of two letters each in their spellers. Then the reading classes were called, one by one, up to the sixth reader. It was time for recess now and Lisita and Mollie who read in the sixth reader, waited until after recess to recite. A very short recess was given, and sometimes none at all, so they were soon called again to their studies. Some of them worked a few examples, after which one class spelled, and they were dismissed for noon.

The pupils hustled for their dinner pails and were soon eating the well prepared lunches their mothers had provided them. Jamie brought his bucket over and he and Lisita ate together.

After lunch was over, the smaller girls made playhouses, using stones for seats and moss for carpet. And no doubt in after years the moss carpeted play house was a palace in memory. Some of the boys were scouring the woods close by and others were playing ball. Lisita and Mollie were walking arm in arm toward the spring by the roadside. Robert Thompson had finished his lunch and was pacing up and down the aisle. He seemed to restless, as indeed he was, for a great question was confronting him, that must be answered soon. He looked out and saw Lisita and Mollie coming from toward the spring with a bucket of fresh water. A beautiful picture they made, and he thought how lonely he would be if it were not for one of them, and he was also interested in the other one. How would the time go in this lonely place, when the light in the home had gone out? He walked out in front of the schoolhouse and saw Victor Coewell coming down the road

on horseback. Victor turned toward the schoolhouse. Robert Thompson was watching very closely and he could not help seeing how happy the girls were to be in Victor's company. When they reached the schoolhouse, Victor shook hands with the teacher and stopped to talk to him while the girls took the water in and put it on the bench. He asked the teacher to tell the scholars after they were called in, about the husking-bee at their home on Wednesday, and that he would like for any of them, or their parents to come that could do so, for he was not sure that everyone in the neighborhood had had an invitation After this he went out and played ball with the boys until the pounding of the knotty stick on the side of the house called them to their books. Then he untied Bess, waived good bye to the girls and was soon out of sight.

The pupils took their places and were confronted by a new pupil, who was a very tall and slender youth. The teacher beckoned him to a seat. "Weedy" Newton was a poor boy who had never been inside of a schoolhouse before, and when the First Reader was called, his six feet of height ambled along and

took a front seat. Lisita and Mollie helped him with his lessons and he could soon read in the first reader. The day dragged along slowly to the teacher and he wondered whether he would be able to "hold his job down," or not, but he was playing a part and this would help him. How he wished it were all at an end and he could claim the prize for which he was working. He heard a few more classes, asigned lessons for the next day and dismissed the school. Several of the scholars invited the teacher home with them, and soon their happy voices blended together, glad in the freedom of dismissal. They took the various roads and bypaths leading to their several homes. Jamie lingered to sweep the floor and lay in kindling and a good supply of wood for the next day. He soon finished his work, and the old schoolhouse that had so lately been the scene of happiness and mirth was now quiet and still. The schoolhouse where the sunbeams stealing in at the open door quickly pointed to noontide and were lost too soon in the quiet hush of evening where shadows lay thick o'er the pathway of the homebound journey.

Robert Thompson walked along ahead of

the girls and when they reached the house in Cave Hollow, Mollie paused to walk with Lisita and then turned to the teacher, saying, "You must come and stay all night with us soon, Mr. Brown." And he, longing to hear more of their history of former years in Scotland, replied "I will come tomorrow night."

At this Mollie started for home, and Lisita, Robert Thompson and Jamie, who had just arrived, went in to find supper ready. After supper Lisita assisted Joan Campbell in washing the dishes and preparing things for breakfast and lunch the next day. Mollie hastened on to her home on the bluff, with her old dog Turk leading the way. She rushed in at the open door and found her father stooping over the coals where he was broiling some smoked fish for supper.

"Ye cum a leetle mite airly, didn't ye," said her father.

"I don't know what time he let out, but we had such a nice school and the teacher is coming to stay with us tomorrow night."

"I reckon he will honor us with his first visit, then—the berries are soakin' (He was speaking of blackberries which had been dried

on a board in the sun) and taters an' apples in the pan," said the fisherman.

After supper Mollie busied herself tidying up their humble cottage, and by daylight next morning she was on her way to Millgrove. She reached the house in Cave Hollow just as Lisita and Jamie were starting. What a lovely walk they had through the woodland. The stillness of the forest was broken by crushing of dry leaves under their feet and the falling of hickorynuts. Away to the east the sun was peeping over the hilltops and soon they heard the glad voices of their schoolmates who were already on the playground. School went on about the same as the day before except for the appearance of a new pupil or two. The teacher read a great deal and did not seem to be much interested in his pupils, and one day during this term of school at the noon hour, some of the older boys and girls who were not entirely satisfied with the usual, daily methods of recreation, borrowed a violin and repaired to a vacant cabin by the roadside, not far distant from the school house and hastily engaged in a "backwoods" or "square dance." When the hilarious notes of the "caller," the harmon-

ious strains of "Soldiers joy" issuing from the fiddle and the stamping of willing and lubberly feet blended together and had reached their height, they were confronted by one of the pious trustees who immediately "called a halt" and hastened in indignation to call a meeting of trustees to investigate the why's and wherefore's of such conduct. At the meeting one trustee said "He was not only surprised but alarmed" and another earnestly declared as he swathed his "swallow-tailed" coat with a majestic sweep of his right hand "That all stoodents" should be larned to obey the Law and the Gaspel to the letter," and it was the unanimous decision of the trustees on adjournment that the "law and Gaspel" in the neighborhood could be better adhered to without any "fiddlin'" or trippings of the "fantastic toe, though the Good Book speaks of "a Time to all Things" they heartily agreed that its meaning' was far from sich dance as this one. True to his promise, the next evening found Thompson on his way to the fisherman's hut. As they neared the cabin on the bluff, smoke could be seen curling out of the chimney for the old fisherman had pulled the coals forward on either side of the

fireplace where some fish were broiling, and to replenish the oven on the hearth in which a pheasant was roasting, and then replenished the fire with wood.

Robert Thompson stood on the bluff for a moment and looked at the river with its peaceful waters gliding noiselessly by, and then at the road under the bluff, that led to the old mill. Mollie stood at the open door, and as the old fisherman came forward, a smile lighting up his countenance, he said to his daughter "Ye'll find everything in readiness, wee wun," and then he walked to where the teacher was standing on the bluff, shook hands with him and said, "We're glad you've cum, Mr. Brown, and I hope your stay with us'll be pleasant. My name is Grant—James Grant, though most everybody calls me 'Uncle Jim'."

"I was just looking at the river," said the teacher.

"Yes, it's a fine view but away nicer by moonlight," said the old fisherman as he led the way into the house and pointed his guest to a home-made rocker that sat in the corner. Mollie had taken up the roast fowl and put some bread to bake in the oven, while she

spread the linen cloth and got everything in readiness for their evening meal. The fire burned brightly and delicious odors mingled with the crackling of the flames. After supper as the old fisherman smoked his pipe, his thoughts flew back to his early home in Scotland and he told it all from beginning to end. Mollie thought the teacher was very much interested in her father's talk, as she was herself. Next morning the old fisherman accompanied them to Cave Hollow, where he got material for chair-making and then walked through the field to where Cornelius Coewell stood. Lisita and Jamie were waiting and they all went together. At noon the teacher had for lunch roast pheasant, broiled ham, apple pie, sweet cakes, biscuit and butter, and as he ate he thought one might do well to take up his abode with the old fisherman and his comely daughter, for they had at least reached one of the avenues which it is said; one can go by to reach the heart.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE HUSKING BEE.

Away before daylight Wednesday morning, the house and barnyard at Coehern were scenes of activity. Cornelius Coewell filled the stove with wood and put a kettle of water on, then went out to the henhouse and selected a half dozen nice fowls to be dressed for dinner. Roanne was making up the beds, Sambo and Rachel were out in the barnyard milking and when they had finished Rachel brought the milk in, while Sambo stayed to get the oxen in line and place so many heavy yokes upon their strong necks. Eph was through currying the horses and was on his way to the dog kennel with pieces of corn pone for Truboy and his companions. Rachel had strained the milk into large crocks in the milk-house and was finishing up the breakfast work, assisted by another dusky maiden, when Cornelius Coewell came up to the door with three chickens in each hand.

"Laws a massy, Marse Coewell! What yo' done murder all dem chickens fo'? Doan yo' know Marse Vick killed a deer yisterddy, an' we are roastin a smoked ham too?" said Rachel.

"Well, I thought we had better have some chickens too, and they that don't like deer meat can eat chickens."

"Dat am so," said Sambo, "an' I'se one dat doan like no deah meat when ar's chickens an' yams." He had just got his oxen in line and they were curving gracefully around the yard fence.

"Marse Coewell, whar do yo' done want dat foddah and corn shocks put?"

"Drive on to the field. Victor will tell you," said Mr. Coewell, and he turned to Roanne who had come to the door just as daylight was dawning bright and clear and said "That little rain last night will help us out. It must be that Providence is aiding us in our work and if we have a good turnout today I believe we can finish both fields. We could have had it all done ourselves, but it seemed that Victor wanted a corn-shucking, and he's got it."

"Yes," said Roanne, "I am glad we left

it. Our son cannot always be with us and I like to see him happy while he is here."

The subject of their conversation was already riding toward the hill-field. They looked toward the river and several men were coming on horseback, and others walking from different directions. When Victor reached the field there were four or five men already at work. He tied Bess at the edge of the field and talked to the men awhile, then threw over a shock, put on his husking peg and worked briskly until he had finished it. Sambo arrived with the oxen and was put to hauling corn-shocks to the barnyard where they were to be piled in a big rick that night, for most of the young folks were not coming until evening, as school was going on. Eph. came later with horses and wagon to haul in the corn. The old fisherman had arrived and he and Cornelius Coewell were clearing out the cribs. "These double cribs will hold a thousand bushels of corn on the cob, and the bins in the granary will hold about as much," said Mr. Coewell.

"And I'll prophesy ye'll hev abundant to fill them if your crop turns out good," said the fisherman.

Their conversation was stopped by Sambo who came driving slowly up with several shocks of corn. He stopped about equal distance between the house and barn and began to unload, placing the shocks in rows, end to end, ten long eight wide and eight deep, tapering some at the top. "Some of Victor's work," said his father.

"If ye git this huskin' over fore midnight, it'll sprise me," said the fisherman.

"Soon Eph arrived with a wagon-bed full of corn, and they helped him throw it in with broad shovels. Thus the morning passed away and hour by hour the cribs were being heaped up with the ripened grain.

"I want the white corn put in the bin in the granary for it makes better meal," said Mr. Coewell. "We could not want a better supper than a plate of mush made from it, and a bowl of milk," said the fisherman.

The morning soon passed away and noontide drew near. From the cornfield Eph was bringing another heapinng load of corn, Sambo with four yoke of oxen, was slowly moving along with several shocks of corn to add to the long pile that lay between the house and barn, and a number of men walking in

single file, had passed through the big gate and were coming from the field, to partake of the bountiful feast. There were twenty in all and when they were seated around the table, weighted with all the luxuries of the age, Cornelius Coewell bowed his head (the rest following his example), and reverently thanked the Lord of all the harvests, for his bountiful supply, asking His blessing to rest on the food and the eater, and that this gathering of the grain might remind them of the sheaves that must be garnered for the great Heavenly Harvest, and that they as co-workers might be labourers side by side in the vineyard of the Lord. "Amen," said the humble fisherman, and all who were present partook of that sumptuous meal with willing appetites.

Finally the conversation turned to the old mill. "Did you hear about the spook at the mill last night?," said one man.

"Yes, I hearn sumpthin of it," said another.

"What about it?" asked Mr. Coewell.

"Well, it was grindin' day at the mill yesterday and Jeff Enon got there late and so many were ahead of him that he left his grist and went to town. It was late when he got

back and the millhouse was closed. He tried the door but it was bolted so he went out to get on his horse and ride to the miller's so as he'd come and get his grist for him but as he walked out past the old mill-rock that lay in front, he saw somethin' acomin' that looked as tall as a man. It come right on up close to him, never sayıng a word, and stopped right in front of his horse, though it didn't 'pear to notice it. I guess Jeff could not move out of his tracks, he was so skeered. He said he couldn't see nothing, only it looked like the form of a man, and in a minute it turned and walked a few steps away, then took the form of somethin' crawlin'. It then disappeared below the mill, and as it disappeared he heard a strange, low cry. Now, I am not telling it for the truth, but that's the way Jeff told it, and he was skeered so he ran that old horse clear home, and left his grist."

"It seems mighty strange," said Mr. Coe-well. "I think it ought to be investigated.

"It seems like them that see it either stand still in their tracks, or run away, but never try to find out what it is," said another.

Seated around the table in that congenial home sixty years ago, was there one in that

number who really wished to investigate?

"Lawsy, Marse Coewell, if dat mysterious rampagin at de mill haint stopped, de fearsomeness ob dis gineration'll grow worser and worser and when dese nat'ral bodies pass away, de ghosticisms'll parade over 'em," said Rachel.

After dinner the husking-bee continued and many more loads of corn were added to that which was already in the double cribs, until they were packed full of the golden grain, the grain that would feed the herds and flocks that roamed silently over the broad fields and drank of the trickling waters that flowed through the pleasant valleys at Coehern. Eventide came on, glad eventide for the willing harvesters and with its coming a crowd of young folks with merry hearts gazed on the great pile of corn shocks that had been piled high between the granary and the house. Two ropes had been suspended from the top of the barn to the house, on either side of the pile of shocks on which so many lanterns hung and burned dimly, but not so dimly but that you could see many couples laughing with glee, forming a circle around the big corn rick. There were Victor and Lisita, side

by side, Robert Thompson and the fisherman's daughter, and others, making in all eight couples. As they kneeled by the rick, a rustic lad called out, "Boys, if you find a red ear, don't forget to do your duty." They all laughed and another said he hoped he'd be in luck, while his fair partner blushed and worked on faster than ever. The older folks sat around the blazing fire and talked. The colored servants were feeding the stock, milking and doing up the supper work, while Roanne Coewell was having the long table in the dining-room filled with good things for the young, industrious "corn-shuckers" who were bringing the husking-bee to such a glorious close, by the light of their suspended lanterns.

Victor Coewell paused a minute, as he pulled the husks apart and saw a bright red ear of corn. He turned to his partner, who saw the red ear, smiled and drew her close in a loving embrace and placed his first kiss on her rosy cheek. As he threw the red ear on the heap, shouts of laughter went up and they all agreed that Coewell was in luck. Thompson was at the other side but had seen it all, and resolved in his heart that he would make

an end of it at once. After the corn was all husked and put away, and the fodder had all been set up in big shocks and tied around with hickory withes, they marched to the house, couple by couple as they had husked corn, and were seated at the long table. They ate, laughed and talked, but Victor never lost sight of his partner, nor failed to see that she got a helping from all the choicest food, and then in his clever and genial way, saw that the most bashful ones did not leave the table hungry.

William Alexander, who had arrived with Lisita in the evening, did not seem to be feeling well, and later fell from his chair. Victor picked him up as though he were a child, and placed him on a home-made couch, raised the window and dashed drops of cold water in his face. He soon revived and found Coewell bending over him. He opened his eyes and said, "Just a little weakness or indisposition. I will soon be feeling better."

"Are you subject to them?" asked Coewell.

"No, sir, not often. I never had them until —"

Robert Thompson came up, and the old man

did not finish the sentence, but added; "Go on with your party. I will soon get up."

Victor was back at Lisita's side in a moment, and as she drew the bow across the strings on the old violin, he heard a sound that filled his heart with gladness. After she had played the "Fisher's Hornpipe," the fisherman drew forth a bagpipe he had brought from his hut, where it had lain for years. The leather sack was covered with dust and cobwebs, but when the tubes were polished that morning with a piece of "linsey," they shone bright as ever, and its shrill notes brought applause from the whole crowd, for this was new to them. As its notes sounded, William Alexander sat upright and gazed on the instrument while his thoughts, as well as those of the fisherman, sped back to their native land across the sea.

When the other couples took their places on the floor for the games, Victor led Lisita into the other room, told her of his love and a wish to claim her for his own. She answered with a smile, and said "Some time. But I have a secret I must tell you first." Long years afterward the happiness of this hour lingered in their memories; in sunshine and shadow

when they were far apart, the thought of it was like a fertile spot in the desert, to a weary wanderer, footsore and tired, whose feet make deep furrows in the burning sand, but stops to rejoice when he sees an Oasis. So in after life when days seemed dark, and the future was wrapped in a mantle of mystery their thoughts returned to that evening when they plighted their love.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LOST RETURNS.

The same night of the husking-bee, when the folks returned to Cave Hollow, Lisita saw a bundle, and a pair of saddle-bags, lying on the table, but her thoughts were so occupied with the happy events of the evening that she passed them by almost unnoticed; went in where the old gentleman was sitting by the fire, and asked "How he was feeling?"

"Very well, now, my child," answered he kindly.

"I am so happy, Grandpa, and I'll never forget this husking-bee," said Lisita.

At the name Grandpa, William Henry Alexander raised his kindly eyes and gazed long and intently on the beautiful face and slender form before him, whose countenance glowed with happiness, and whose lustrous, starry eyes shone with a wonderful light. As he sat there a vision of the past came to him and he seemed to see his great ancestors before

him, in youth and beauty, but what was the innocent girl to him, who had so mysteriously found her way to their cave-house a few months ago? After she bade him good night and went to her room, she returned to his bedside to see if he was resting well. As she adjusted the covers on the bed and stroked his forehead with her soft hand, she realized he was her only true friend in that house. As she left his bed, she turned again and looked on the kind old face from which she would be many miles away before daylight, though she did not think of such a thing when she stole softly to her room, took her place by the side of Joan Campbell, and soon fell into a pleasant slumber.

About four o'clock in the morning she was rudely awakened by the old lady who said, "Be quick, Bonnie Lassie. Ye'll soon be leavin' this old hollow and the Laddie ye love, and when the sun comes up, spreadin' its gude licht, ye'll be ridin' through the braes, and ye maun not trust the dark Laddie. I can but do his biddin'."

Lisita could scarcely realize the situation and wondered why she would speak so of her son, as she was led to the table where a glass

of milk, eggs, ham and brown bread was set before her. Almost as soon as she had finished, a dark form entered the room, threw a shawl over her head, carried her out in the darkness and placed her on one of the waiting ponies. When daylight dawned she was far from the vicinity of the old mill, riding the same brown pony that had carried her into the wilderness a few months ago. The deep forest, the cave and its mysterious inhabitants, which she had seen, opened her eyes to see, filled her with fear and a longing to be back in the vine covered cabin of her Aunt Nancy, the only home she had ever known. She realized that each hour she was being borne farther and farther away from Cave Hollow, the place where she had walked daily with a refined and competent teacher who had led her into the narrow paths where nature abounds in its fullness, taught her Bible, reading, writing, arithmetic and the use of language, and music. With the sweep of the bow across the old violin, she could rend the sweetest notes from its strings.

In Cave Hollow she had met her first love and she was loth to leave it all and as she was being carried farther and farther away she

wondered what the future held in store for her. She had learned much about her dark companion in the past few months—that he was wicked, cruel, dishonest and jealous she was sure, she did not fear him, as she had never come to any harm at his hands. But she did not know what he might contrive in the future, with his artful cunning. At nightfall the ponies travelled at a slower pace for they, as well as their riders, were tired of the long journey. Lisita saw the friendly light of a candle shining out from a small window of a log cabin by the roadside, and as they drew near she was neither sorry nor surprised to hear her dark companion call out "Hello," and when someone answered ask if he could get a night's lodging for himself and his sister, who were on their way to attend a brother's funeral. He told the people in the cabin that he and his sister would have to start by four o'clock next morning, to get there in time.

"I reckon we can keep you," said the man in the cabin door.

They alighted and went into the house while a pleasant looking lad took their ponies away to the stable, fed and watered them, and

when he returned, placed more wood on the fire and took a seat near Lisita. In his friendly way he asked many questions about their journey but found out very little truth for Thompson made his own story. He did not like the friendly youth who seemed so interested in Lisita, and was glad when they went to their beds in the loft. Lisita slept with one of the girls, and her first thought was to slip away in the night, but she abandoned the plan lest someone would hear her, and soon fell asleep. In her dreams she was back in the old Hollow, following the narrow path to Millgrove, and stood again by the side of her stalwart, handsome lover at Coehern, and as the vine covered cabin of her Aunt Nancy came to view, she was awakened by someone stirring in her room, and a friendly hand touched her and told her breakfast was ready. It was the girl who had slept with her. She arose, dressed herself by the lighted candle on the window-sill, combed her hair, and followed the girl to the kitchen where she found a basin of water to wash in, after which she was seated at the breakfast table with her dark companion.

"It's chilly this mornin' an' goin' out so

early you must wrap up well or you'll get cold ridin'," said the old lady to Lisita.

"I have a shawl," said Lisita.

The pleasant-faced youth came in and told them their ponies were ready. Lisita put on her hood and threw her shawl around her shoulders as the youth walked up, escorted her to the pony and easily lifted her into the saddle. They were not charged anything for their night's lodging, and asked to stop again on their return. Thompson, who was not in a good humor, kept the ponies going at a good pace. He told Lisita every hour was taking her farther from her ardent lover at Coehern and it was his wish that she forget him, for she would likely never meet him again.

"I shall never forget him," said she.

"Oh, you won't? Then I can prove to you in time that he loves the fisherman's daughter."

Lisita had thought at times that Victor and Mollie were indeed true friedns, but could not there be a deeper friendship? This filled her with wonder, and Thompson, who felt he had gained a point in the game he was playing, asked her how she liked the looks of the

friendly youth at the cabin where they found lodging.

" I liked his looks much better than yours," she replied.

" Oh, I thought so. Most anyone would like such a friendly 'greenhorn'," said he.

" He merely treated me with respect and I admire him for his open frank countenance, and friendly manner in which I am sure one would find no trace of treachery or dishonesty," said she.

"If my plans work, you'll never see him or Coewell again," said he.

Lisita made no answer and as they rode silently along a fear came over her and she wondered what the future really held in its depths. The sun was coming up over the hilltops, filling the land with its warmth and light. The frost was disappearing from the fence rails along the road, the birds were warbling in the trees and a squirrel was slyly creeping up and winding its way around a slender hickory tree in a fence corner.

Everything seemed to be glad this morning. Yes, glad and free, thought Lisita, and she who had recently been so happy, now a captive riding through a strange country, far

from home and friends. In the evening a flock of wild geese were seen flying south and the country around looked familiar to Lisita. In an hour's time they were in sight of the little church where she and her Aunt Nancy had spent many happy hours. A wonderful light filled her eyes as the scenes of her early years came to view. She almost looked and spoke pleasantly to her dark companion now for she could not conceal her happiness when she knew that each minute she was drawing closer to the home of her childhood. In the twilight, at the edge of the field, he told her to alight and when she jumped to the ground he took her pony by the reins, gave her a bundle, and was off down the narrow path, calling back " I will come for you again when all is ready." She heard the ponies' hoofbeats against the gravel in the path as they went farther and farther away, and she knew she was free again. As she walked across the field, thoughts of her Aunt Nancy filled her mind. She wondered if she were alive and well and a great longing filled her as the vine covered cabin came to view It was dark now and the little candle burned brightly in the window, as indeed it had ever since that

bright evening in June when she did not return from the berry field. She came up close to the window and saw her Aunt Nancy in the kitchen preparing the evening meal, while a youthful lad was sitting by the open fire, with a book in his hand.

As she pulled the latch-string the boy arose to his feet and saw a slender girl running toward the open arms of Nancy Lake, which closed around her in a loving embrace.

"My child, how you have changed," said Nancy Lake, who saw before her Lisita, not the same little girl who had disappeared so mysteriously some months ago, but instead a graceful, womanly form stood before her, from whose eyes shone a wonderful light, a light that had been kindled in the heart by the flame of love.

"Where have you been, child, all these long days?"

"Way off, Auntie. You are just the same, only you have a girl and a boy now," said Lisita.

"Wip" lay down his book and smiled as Lisita and her aunt talked on.

"I smell sassafras tea," said Lisita, and she turned, to see the kettle boiling on the stove.

When they had finished supper she told them of the cave house far away, of its occupants, of the fisherman and his daughter and of the Coewells. " How strange it seems that cave-dwellers would come so far to steal you away. There must be some hidden secret behind it all," said Nancy Lake.

" Gee, I'd like to see the cave. I'll bet there's Injuns there," said " Wip."

" The old man was so kind to me and taught me so many things I would not have known otherwise."

" What was his name?" asked Nancy Lake.

"They went by the name of Brown but the old man told me that was not his right name and he would tell me all some day, but it is too late now," said Lisita.

Then her aunt told her of a box that had been left in her care years ago and as she described it Lisita's thoughts were back in the Cave where an old cedar chest sat in the corner, whose lid was opened when the old man seemed to be looking for something. He had placed a heavy, leather wallet, filled with shining gold pieces, on the floor and given her other things to hold while he was searching to the very bottom of the chest and she saw

a box similar to the one her Aunt described.

"I have seen just such a box somewhere," said Lisita, and her aunt, thinking it was still where she had kept it for years, nodded assent.

They retired at a late hour and Nancy Lake lay awake and pondered over the girl's disappearance, her return and the strange inhabitants of the cave.

"How nice it is to have a brother," said Lisita the next morning as she seated herself at the spinning wheel, while the wool was drawn and twisted into yarn and wound around so many spools. Her thoghts flew back to Coehern. Soon an idea presented itself. Yes, I will write him a letter, thought she. Lisita could write well and she told the whole story on paper, sealed it in an envelope and the boy took it to the postoffice three miles away. As she took her place at the spinning wheel again, she thought—Victor will soon know where I am and why I was not at home when he called on Thanksgiving.

Wherever Lisita went, following her always the thought of her dark companion's parting words, that he would return for her when all was ready.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A TRAVELLER ON THE HIGHWAY.

When Cecil Cox came face to face with the shabbily dressed traveller who removed his wig and glasses, he saw it was a wily detective, sent by a brother from an agency in London, whom he had met once before across the water, on a case that was clouded in mystery. The detective knew Cox at once, and also knew why he was in America, for he had been working on the case for four months and knew the names of every one who had sailed for this country since, and before he agreed to endeavor to clear up the mystery that concealed William Alexander and his bags of gold. The detective drew near Mr. Cox and taking some pictures from his vest pocket, asked if he had seen anyone in this country whom the pictures resembled.

"No, sir, but I know now that our search or our interests are mutual."

"Any newcomers in this section, since

about April, I would say?" said the detective.

"Well, now, let me see. Not that I know of, I guess, except a family of Browns from Pennsylvania. I heard Mr. Coewell say he sold them a piece of land this Fall," answered Mr. Cox.

" How far is it to Coewells?" asked the detective.

"About twenty-five miles, almost due north of here," said Mr. Cox.

" Very well," said the detective. " We must be strangers from now on, unless we are entirely alone. Do you understand?"

Mr. Cox nodded his head in the affirmative and the detective hastily replaced his wig and glasses. When they met again in the sitting-room of the tavern, they talked of commonplace things, and toward nightfall the shabbily dressed stranger paid for his lodging and went on his way. Mr. Cox felt sure now that sooner or later his brother-in-law would be found—but what of the delicate, brown-eyed baby, whose picture was carried with the rest? He did not quite understand it all.

The detective was on another mission as well as to search for the old man and his gold, a mission to locate the son who stayed in this

country after his father returned to Scotland years ago, and to learn whether or not the son had a family. They knew nothing definite about the son, but had heard that he was dead. The detective knew, as he walked along the highways, or in lonesome bypaths, that they were looking to him to unravel the whole proceeding in detail, and he felt he was equal to the task, though it would take some time for he must travel miles and miles on foot in order to reach all the parties he wished to see.

He spent the night at a farmhouse a few miles from the tavern, and the next morning he threw the bundle, tied up in a red handkerchief, across his shoulder and moved slowly along toward Horn Creek, where he thought he could get news of the son. Sometimes he posed as a tramp, other times as a beggar or a fortune-teller. Many times he slept in a stable loft and early next morning slowly pursued his way. In early December he finally reached Horn Creek and stopped at a cabin of an old settler where he thought he would be apt to get some information. He had left the main road and come through a clearing on the hillside. When he reached

the foot of the hill, he saw a clump of trees, and as he drew nearer he found a spring of clear water, shaded by the trees, with a gourd hanging close by on the limb of a small tree. He reached the gourd, dipped it into the clear, cold water, raised it to his lips and drank the refreshing draught from its broad sides. As he hung the gourd on the limb, he looked through the clump of trees to the cabin on the bank of the creek and saw two men engaged in a wrestling match. When he reached the cabin and asked for a night's lodging, he was met at the door by an old man, with dark complexion, who inquired as to the stranger's business.

"I am visiting friends and relatives, but have missed my way," said the detective.

"Who are your relatives?" asked the old man.

"Alexander—William Alexander. Do you know anything of him?" asked the detecitve.

"Well, no, I reckon not, but I guess he's dead."

Try as he would, the detective could not get any more information there, but was directed to another house seven miles away for information. This of course, was misleading,

but the detective felt the old man had an unearthed secret and his silence added to the chain of evidence. The detective was undecided whether or not he must go to the house designated by the old man, but at last decided to go for he at least must know just why he wanted him to visit the house many miles away. Some days later he arrived at the house to which he was directed by the old man on Horn Creek. He was met at the door by a tall man who resembled the old settler who had sent him there, but was younger, and the detective knew at a glance that the old man had sent him to his brother.

"Can I get a night's lodging?" asked the detective.

"No, sir, we don't keep strangers," said the man in the door.

"Do you know any Alexanders in this section?" asked the detective.

"If you're lookin 'for them, you're in the wrong neighborhood, cause there's nobody by that name for miles around," said the man in the door.

"How long have you lived here?" asked the detective.

"Nigh on to twenty years, I spect, and be-

sides I don't think a big land-holder would want a tramp like you around," said the man in the door.

"Who is the big land-holder?" asked the detective.

The man in the door stood like a statue and would not say anything farther, on the subject. The detective asked the way to Freeman's Creek, and when he was directed took exactly the opposite direction, for he knew by the map he carried in his pocket he had been told to go in the wrong direction. After a few days travel through the rain and snow he reached Freeman's Creek and found lodging at a large farmhouse where he found contentment and quiet—where a herd of cattle roamed over the fields — where hams of meat hung in the smoke house — great logs of wood were burning in the fire-place and the hum of the spinning wheel could be heard within, while outside the soft gurgling of the restless waters of the creek flowing ever onward, reminded him of time's ceaseless flight.

After Robert Thompson left Lisita in the woods by the cleared field, he sped like an arrow in its flight, headed for Cave Hollow and on Sunday evening about sunset, he passed

the old mill and was riding one pony up the narrow path, while the other followed in the rear. When he reached the house he found Joan and Jamie Campbell at the sppper table, while the old man, with bowed head, sat before the fire.

"Not eating supper, old man? Well, if your appetite isn't good we'lll see that you take more wine." said Thompson.

The old man made no reply for he knew that he was in treacherous hands and the only friend he had was the girl who had brought so much happiness to him, and in whom he was so much interested. She had gone, disappearing at once, leaving no trace. The so-called wine he feared like a serpent, for it had a peculiar taste, caused him to sleep and on waking he felt a sickening sensation and was too weak to walk for some time. He felt sure now that this was taking his life by degrees, and a larger dose might be given at any time. The thought filled him with fear—he had not forgotten the cruel treatment the night of the husking-bee and he resolved to let someone know as soon as he could, lest he fill an unknown grave in a strange land, and his possessions fall into the hands of treach-

erous deceivers. A hand touched him roughly on the shoulder and he looked up to meet the wicked look in Thompson's dark eyes.

"Old man, I mean to stay it out till Spring, at Millgrove, and if any of them Coewells come prowling around, show no sociability and tell them the girl went to Pennsylvania to spend the winter with her sister. Do you hear, sir?"

The old man did not intend to do so, and would not even nod his head. This made Thompson very angry and he shoved the old man from his chair to the floor and kicked him a number of times. This brought Joan and Jamie Cambpell into the room. They were afraid to say much but disliked to see the old man treated so cruelly and when Thompson stepped out, they picked him up and laid him on the bed.

The Coxes stayed at the tavern a few days after the detective left, then set out for a trip to locate his brother. They drove along slowly for two or three days, stopping at night for lodging and to have their horses cared for. They came to a little store at the forks of the road, about fifty miles from the tavern and were told there was a family of Coxes

on a farm about two miles further. Philip Cox (the brother they were searching for) had reached this country many years ago and settled in Gilmer county. He owned a farm and had raised a large family of thrifty and industrious children. That very day they had butchered a number of hogs, and while they were working with the meat in the smoke-house, he thought of his relatives across the sea, and wondered if he would ever see them again.

About dark of the same evening, a spring wagon drew up and stopped in the stable lot. "Who can it be," he said, as he hastened out to meet them, and found his brother and his wife from across the sea. A friendly hand-shake ensued, while glistening tears filled their eyes— tears of joy, for though the broad waters of the Atlantic lay between their homes, they had at last found each other. After a two weeks' visit with his brother and his family, who had so warmly received them, they bade them good-bye, and as they drove from his sight, they felt sure they would never meet him again on earth.

"This visit to our brother will more than

pay us for our trip," said Mrs. Cox, as they drove along.

"Yes, that was a visit in a hundred, but I am sorry we could not learn anything defnite about our nephew's death," said Cecil Cox.

They had heard that he died about fifteen years before but had never learned the cause of his death. After a three days' drive they returned to Coewells.

CHAPTER XXVIII

STILL FOLLOWING THE GLEAM.

The morning after the husking-bee at Coehern, Cornelius Coewell walked out past the granary and on up the slope where three chestnut trees stood in a row against the hillside, then followed the narrow path that led to the summit of a hill called Indian Rest, where so many rocky mounds marked the Indians' quiet resting place. As he stood on the summit of Indian Rest and viewed his home, surrounded by fertile fields which yielded abundant crops, the sun in its crimson beauty, as it rose o'er the hilltops, covered the land with gladness and light, as if it were the smile of the Lord. And he felt that Providence, whose ways are sometimes mysterious, had guided him in the paths of peace and plenty. The wheat and oats had been cradled. stacked and threshed—a wagon load of wheat had been hauled away and ground into flour for bread; the corn had been cut, shocked

and husked; the potatoes had been dug, dried out and buried in large mounds in the garden; the apples had been picked, sorted and put into barrels or buried; the flax that grew in abundance, had been pulled, stacked in heaps to rot, taken through the brake, hackled, swingled and spun into a thousand threads which Roanne would weave into a wonderful piece of cloth. Ten hogs had been butchered and the long boards that reached from one end of the meat-house to the other, were bending under their heavy load of hams and shoulders going through the process of taking salt before being packed away in the large hogshead till February, when it would be taken out and put on the wooden hooks to hang from the rafters of the dark, old smoke-house. The ash-hoppers whose sides were bulging with ashes from the fireplace, were filled higher and higher till spring, when moistened with rain-water, they ran lye for soap making. Great long piles of stove-wood had been placed beneath the shed in the wood-lot, a large pile of back-logs lay close by, and a pile of fire-wood, green and dry, lay close to the chopping-block. Bags of home-made cheese were dripping from white cloths

in the milk-house, the poultry roamed through the barnyard and the tinkle of the sheep-bell could be heard in the field.

Cornelius Coewell, contented and happy with his lot, while viewing the landscape from the gentle elevation of Indian Rest, was filled with memories of an earlier day. Many changes had taken place there since his grandfather secured a deed from the Government had his land surveyed and built his cabin home. He had heard his father say "every foot of it was woodsland then," and the towering trees that cut off the view to the river formed a hiding place for wild turkeys, deer and bear, and the red man with his stealthy stride, who was once so happy on this spacious hunting ground, had at last found a quiet sleeping place on the crested sward of Indian Rest, after which he hoped to meet his brother warriors again on the great Happy Hunting Ground beyond. But now the long, level strips of land, lying between the house and the river, looked as though a tree had never grown there, or taken root in its fertile soil. He thought of the time when he came home to the log cabin, bringing Roanne as his young bride. They had ridden through the

country for over fifty miles, fording streams that were almost deep enough to swim, their horses surmounting every obstacle that lay between them and their destination until they reached the cabin home, where a wedding supper was waiting for them, with warm greetings from the kind old mother and father, and a few neighbors who had gathered in, to await their coming.

The other children were all married and in homes of their own. He remembered how he and Roanne had lived with, and taken care of the old folks until they found a resting place beneath the pine on the bluff overlooking the river. He thought how they had prospered from year to year, how the sons had come to brighten their lives, and how the old cabin home he loved so well, had grown into a modern mansion. He heard footsteps behind him and turned, while a cheerful "guid mornin'" came from the lips of the old fisherman. "Ye hev been blessed, Cornelius, and rightly so," said the fisherman.

"Why so, my good friend?" asked Mr. Coewell.

"The Guid Book tells us 'Ye never see the righteous forsaken, nor their seed beggin'

bread,' and I hev found it true," answered the fisherman.

"There are none good, no, not one," replied Mr. Coewell.

The fisherman and Mr. Coewell walked down the slope together. On their way down, they looked across to the hill-field and saw Victor riding toward the low-gap. When Victor arrived in Cave Hollow, a great stillness seemed to hover around the house like the stillness of death. He tied his horse and knocked on the door but no friendly voice said "come in." He knocked again and heard footsteps within. Joan Campbell opened the door and nodded coldly to his friendly greeting. She did not invite him in but cautiously handed him a note. He unfolded it and read

"Dear Friend:

"I am going to my sister's in Pennsylvania to spend the winter. Will write you later.

"LISITA."

He raised his head and looked at the old lady for a moment with an expression of wonder, tipped his hat and was off down the Hollow. He thought as he rode along of how coldly the old lady had met him. He was sure they did not want him to come in, for she had not even asked him in. The old gen-

tleman was nowhere to be seen. He hoped no evil fate would come between him and the beautiful maiden he had chosen for his wife. A few evenings after this, a man with a dark complexion, asked for Coewell's mail, at the postoffice. He was handed a letter for Victor, and a paper, but this letter that would have brought much happiness to Victor was destined to find a hiding place in a dark crevice of the strange, underground cavern, and another letter was sealed in the same envelope. So busy was the postmaster with other mail that he failed to see the dark-eyed man drop the letter and paper on the counter and hurry out to his waiting pony. He was a mile or more away before the old postmaster noticed them lying on the counter. "That man is too forgetful to carry mail," said the postmaster, and he put them back in the office.

When Sambo went to the postoffice the next day, he got the letter and some papers. When he reached Coehern he handed the mail to Mrs. Coewell. "A letter for Victor," said she, and laid it on the mantel. When Victor came in late in the evening it was handed to him. He smiled, hastily tore it open and read as follows:

"Dear Friend:

"I am sorry I gave you the promise I did on the night of the huskingbee for I cannot fulfill it, and I regret very much that I answered your important question so hastily. My father thinks I am too young to get married, and I know it. From now on I will live with my sister and I bid you adieu.

"LISITA."

Victor read and re-read it as though it were not true. Yet it must be for she had written it in her own hand, and he must believe it, even if it was a great blow to him. He tore it into sherds and threw it behind the back-log. It has not called for an answer, then why reply? thought he. He picked up his hat and said "Mother, I'll be back after awhile." His stalwart form soon disappeared in the darkness. No night had ever seemed so dark to him before, and as he followed the narrow path across the field to the fisherman's hut, with heavy heart, he could not get it out of his mind that a great shadow lay between him and happiness. Thoughts of the happy days they had spent together, must smoulder and die, under the ruins of the castle that love had built. The future looked dark but as he saw the dim light shining out of the window, in the fisherman's hut, he made a firm resolve.

He could hear voices within and he knocked on the door. A friendly voice said "Come in" and he pulled the latch-string and stood in the presence of the fisherman and his daughter, who were sitting by a bright fire, talking over the events of the day. They gave him a warm welcome, and the old man who had been his advisor and friend, was smoking his pipe while great wreaths of smoke enveloped his kind, old face.

"How are you this evening, Uncle Jim?"

"Well enough, I guess. We were talk'ng over some happenings at school. It seems that the people are turnin' agin the teacher and some of 'em are stoppin' their children, though Moll seems to be likin' it very well," said the fisherman, and as Victor saw the sparkle in her eyes, he guessed the reason.

"I am in trouble, Uncle Jim," said Victor.

"Why so, my boy?"

Then Victor related the whole story of his visit to Cave Hollow, the cold reception he received from the old lady, and the letter.

"Well, gurls 'll change their minds you know, but trouble, young man, is a chastenin' rod that brings us to higher and better things," answered the fisherman.

"I am sorry she is gone. We will miss her so much at school," said Mollie.

Victor stayed until ten o'clock then bade them good-night. Ae he walked homeward he heard a low wail in the direction ofthe low-gap. He listened again and was sure it was a dog, but it changed and sounded more like a human voice, then died away on the night wind. Victor ran toward the Low-gap but when he got there everything was still. He went back to the house, and as he went by the cabin of Uncle Sambo and Aunt Rachel, they seemed to be in great fear.

"Dem ghosts am sho awful, and am gittin' too tame fo' me, and I specks nothin' short ob a murder'll be do poformance fo long," said Aunt Rachel.

Victor went to bed and rose early next morning. When they sat down to breakfast, he said, "Mother, I have decided to go out to Maryland again and study medicine under my old teacher. I want to be ready to go this evening."

His mother was pleased, for she was so anxious that he learn the profession, and after breakfast she busied herself getting his clothes ready, raised the lid from the old iron

pot, took out some gold pieces and gave to him. That evening as he walked down the lane to the river, he resolved firmly, as he had the night before, to follow the gleam of the woodland to its very summit. As he passed from their sight, he heard the slaves in the cabin singing, "Sweet Chariot." As the sound of their voices died away in harmonious notes, he realized his boyhood home had passed away forever. The corn-stalk fiddle and the water-wheel he used to make, no longer interested him, and from now on he must be a man, not only in name, but in deeds, and to aid the world by knowing his profession and practicing it. He did not realize now that he would be called at all times, night or day, to ride for miles through the lonesome country, and patiently wait by the bedside of those who were in the throes of death, until the crisis had passed—that his calomel and quinine would fail in its desired effects on a patient, whom the Great Physician saw fit to number with the silent dead, and that he must win his name in the honorable profession, by patient service rendered to his fellow man, rich or poor.

Victor reached the village that night and

took the first boat down the river the next morning. As he stood upon the deck and watched the waves rise and fall, as they glided farther and farther away until they were out of sight, the image of a brown eyed maiden was ever before him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LISITA, A TEACHER.

The hum, hum of the spinning-wheel had ceased in the home of Nancy Lake on every day in the week except Saturday but the thwack of the heavy loom could be heard early and late, for Nancy Lake was left alone all day while Lisita and "Wip" attended school at the little church at the forks, a building that served as both schoolhouse and church. She worked at the heavy old loom with a glad heart and willing hands, for the lost girl who had been a ray of sunshine in the cabin, had returned and she must weave sufficient cloth to make under and outer garments for a family of three, besides a few yards extra with which to clothe some orphan children of the neighborhood. With the help of the boy she had sheared the sheep, picked and washed the wool, bleached and dried it. When it was thoroughly bleached and dried

she carded it, or drew it through a wire brush and twisted it into long, slender rolls.

Lisita had arrived in time to spin it into yarn. In late July "Wip" had pulled and spread the flax, rippled it when dry, tied it in bundles, stacked and rotted it, and took it through the brake. He and his Aunt Nancy had swingled and hackled it and then came the drawing and spreading to separate the rolls into slivers and spread them according to their fineness. Lisita had also spun it into flaxen thread. Nancy had sat at the loom all day, where a strong and durable cloth was in the making and every stroke of the heavy beam sent a thread of the woof over and under the warp, to lie evenly and snugly up to the one that had preceded it, to take its place in the strong cloth in which every separate thread that had been shoved home, must take a part in the grand whole. No fabric is stronger than its weakest thread,—no school above its pupils and teacher,—no college is stronger than its professors and instructors, —no country is greater than its rulers and people. Then who is strong?

When a nation inhabited largely by foreigners coming from time to time can mingle

together for enlightment, and work together for the betterment of each other's cause, as though it were one, and thus make the weak ones strong, and in so doing give strength to the whole nation. And a nation of people cannot grow strong and stand, without calling on Him for aid, who is Strength.

Nancy Lake turned from the loom to look at the large, old clock, (called Grandfather's Clock today), on the mantel, and was surprised to see it was four o'clock. She left the loom, went to the fireplace, picked up the shovel and stirred the ashes to see if she could find some live coals. But alas! She had sat at the loom too long and the fire had entirely died out. There were matches in those days but most people never allowed the fire to die out from year to year. She took up two flint rocks and hastily struck them together with downward motion of the right hand. The flying sparks caught in a piece of scorched tow and was blown into a flame, which set the shavings on fire, and a bright blaze soon burned on the hearth. When it burned into coals, a shovelful was taken to the kitchen stove and soon the oven of the stove was hot enough to bake bread for their

evening meal. When supper was about ready she heard voices outside. She opened the door and met " Wip's " pleasant smile.

"Say, Aunt, they want her, (pointing to Lisita), to teach the school now, 'cause the teacher took sick."

Nancy Lake looked in wonder from one to the other, and said " I wonder if she could?"

" Oh, 'course she can. She's teached us more'n anybody else has, an' I'll see 'at she gits there every mornin', said the boy.

Lisita was amused at the boy's opinion of her, and felt sure if the other scholars had the same opinion of her, she would have good success. " I can try it, Auntie," said Lisita.

"That's so," said Nancy Lake, and new life seemed to spring up within her as she thought how nice it would be for the little girl, who had been left with her, to really be a teacher —and besides, she could earn some money. A song floated out from her lips, and as she spread the cloth its strains floated upward until they could be heard no more, like the steam from the tea kettle on the stove, that faded into vapor. The ham that was frying in the skillet, made a hissing sound and its

savory odors filled the little cabin. The boy was doing up the chores and Lisita's mind seemed to be occupied with thoughts of her own. She wondered what her stalwart lover would think, if he knew she had been chosen to fill the teacher's place. He must at least know where she was and why she left Cave Hollow, by this time, for she had sent him a letter more than a week ago, and she knew they got their mail every week. And again thoughts of the school-house filled her mind. She knew she could teach reading, writing and arithmetic, to the Rule of Three, but how could she manage little Tommy Hunter, who was constantly pilfering? She reached a sudden decision and was sure it would solve the problem.

Just then "Wip" came running in and handed Lisita a letter, saying "I got it at the postoffice at noon, but we got to playin' and I fegot all about it, till I took off my coat to climb in the stable loft, an' I seen its white edge stickin' out."

"You are a good boy, not to lose it."

She hastily tore it open but to her surprise it read as follows: "Kind Friend—I regret that I asked you the question I did for I am

anxious to get an education before I am burdened with a wife. I admit I was too hasty, not knowing any more about you, or on such short acquaintance. Hope you will pardon me and forget our short courtship. Victor." These words sounded so unlike the words Coewell had spoken to her and a deep gloom seemed to settle around her as she held the letter tightly folded in her hand. She did not read it again but concealed it in a crevice where it lay for some time.

"Call me at six o'clock in the morning, Auntie. Good night," said Lisita.

The darkness of the night had fallen and a group of dark clouds seemed to bound her horizon, as she lay in bed, her head cushioned on a downy pillow. Her thoughts flew back to Cave Hollow, but the dream of the woodland was ended. Love's Dream that had been swept away by the cruel waters of pride, like a leaf in a mighty gale.

The flowers she plucked in the wildwood by the side of her old teacher, had decayed: the laughing brook was lost to her forever, and only one lesson remained with her— the lesson she had learned from the books of her

old teacher, and his kind, sensible advice. These lessons of which no one could rob her, must be her guiding lamp.

Nancy Lake arose promptly at five o'clock the next morning and when she had kindled a fire in the kitchen stove, called the boy who hastily dressed himself, built a blazing fire in the sitting-room, fed, watered and curried the horses, milked the cows and carried in wood to do all day. Lisita was called at six. After breakfast she arranged a lunch for herself and the boy. About half past seven, two horses were saddled and stood in waiting by the fence, with a sack containing twenty ears of corn thrown over the back of the horse he was to ride.

Lisita, with lunch basket made of colored straw, came hurrying out, stepped upon the upping block, sprang into the saddle and they were off at a good pace across the fields and through the lanes, to the little church at the Forks. When they reached the church, the boy led the horses away, and as Lisita approached the building everything seemed dark her. The unkind letter she had received had turned the world from light to darkness. But by and by as the days wore on she became

so interested in her pupils and work that she could see beyond the dark shadows to where the gleam of a beacon light shone brighter and brighter, and filled her heart with gladnes.

School went along nicely and the minutes and hours seemed to fly, so quickly did they pass. At recess, when all the children were out playing, she saw Tommy Hunter steal on tiptoe to one of the desks. She walked up to him, and said "What are you doing, Tommy?"

"Nothin', only this is my slate pencil."

"And why is it yours, Tommy?"

"'Cause 'tis."

She said, "Tommy, if you earned money and bought a pencil it would be yours, or if someone gave it to you, it would be yours, but if you take it from someone else, or out of another's desk, it would be stealing. And besides, you break one of the Commandments. Do you remember the one we repeated this morning?"

"Yes, mom. Ye mustn't steal."

"Well, you see Tommy, that means that you must not take anything that does not belong to you, without the owner's consent. Here is

a pencil and slate that you may use, and after this when you want anything that is not yours, speak to me about it."

Tommy looked up into her eyes and felt that he had found a friend. She was acting in the role of teacher and parent, or so much so that she tried to do the work for pupils, which parents had left undone, saw in Tommy a possibility. If she could so influence his actions as to cause him to do the right, and feel the responsibility of getting perfect lessons, a great character was in the making, and for this one pupil her work would not be in vain. Yet there were many others beside Tommy, who looked to her for counsel and aid. Then well might she afford to watch her actions and words if she were the model they must pattern after. "The great sculptor saw in the rejected piece of crude stone, a beautiful statue," so in each child, moulded in the image of God, breathing the breath of life, there is a chance of unfoldment, a possibility or likelihood.

It was the custom at that time for the teacher to stay one night with each family whose children attended the school and Lisita learned more about Tommy's daily life and

habits when she walked across the lonely way with him, two miles or more, to the little ill-smelling cabin that sheltered Tommy, his father, mother and three smaller children. Cornbread, molasses and rabbit was what they had for supper. The father had been well named Hunter, for he did little but hunt, while the mother was stout, good-natured and slow. Not a book or paper could be found in the house. Tommy was ordered off to get wood and water. Lisita's heart went out to him as he kindled the fire, swept the hearth and tried to make her comfortable. She was so hungry next day she could hardly wait till noon. At noon, when "Wip" came running up with a big bucket of dinner, they divided with Tommy and from that day on, Lisita and Tommy became good friends. So when school was out and corn-hoeing time came on, Tommy made his home at Nancy Lake's and helped to ho ecorn, at a small sum per week, and the true friendship and sympathy given by Lisita aided him in marking out a definite goal which he pursued diligently until he became a teacher and a very useful citizen.

CHAPTER XXX

ANOTHER STRANGER AT NANCY LAKE'S.

The detective who had found comfortable lodgings with a congenial family whose hospitality was not excelled by that of the Coewell's, was in no hurry. He must do his work thoroughly and return to the agency across the sea, after every detail of the two mysteries was solved. While he was a guest in that home which he had reached by miles of hard and slow travel on foot, many conversations took place around the fireside, to while away the long evenings. Curious questions and likewise strange answers sprang from the lips of the detective and his host, as they puffed their pipes of clay.

"How long have you lived here? asked the detective.

"All my life, sir. My father settled in this valley about seventy years ago. He was a big land-holder and at his death the land went

to his sons. This is the home-place and I guess there are over three hundred acres of land in it."

"Do you know a family by the name of Lake in this section?" asked the letective.

"Yes, sir. Old Nathan Lake lives about two miles down the creek, and a fine old man he is. He has never been a large landholder but he is honest to the core."

"Did Mr. Lake have children?"

"Yes, sir, he raised a good family of children, respectable and industrious. They are all married now. The youngest and prettiest girl he had took up with a feller from acrost the sea. Some said they was married and some said they wasn't, but I know they was for I witnessed it at the Squires. They asked me to keep it a secret for a time but I never knew why and I dunno yit, unless it was on account of aristocratic relatives acrost the sea."

"What sort of woman was this young Miss Lake?" asked the detective.

"Polly Lake, a s they called her, was comely and industrious. To my notion would have graced any man's cabin. I've seen her work in the field beside her Pa, and then I've seen

her scrub the floors and shelves of their cabin, till it fairly shone. She uster to carry her shoes nigh up to the meetin' house and then put 'em on to save 'em after this young feller got so thick with her, and married her she wore better clothes and shoes. She uster to bleach the yarn and the linen to a snowy whiteness with wood ashes. She could spin and weave the finest cloth, but after he died she seemed gloomy and sad, so the distaff and spindle stood still."

"What was this fellow's name?" asked the detective.

"Alexander. Will, I think, was his given name. He was tall, good looking and young. He taught school this side of Horn Creek and stayed at Nathan Lake's. Not long after school was out he had a wrestle with a fellow and died a short time after."

"What can you tell me of this wrestling match?" asked the detective.

"Well, no one I guess, was ever able to get the straight of it. I think there was a little jealousy in it. A young man from Horn Creek did not like it because Alexander was said to be the best wrestler in the country. One evening this young man and his brother

met Alexander in an out-of-the-way place, and bantered him for a wrestle. Not much could be learned about it and all Alexander would say was that they did not give him a square deal. The fellers from Horn Creek would not tell nothin' so it soon all died down."

"Do you think Alexander really cared for this Polly Lake?" asked the detective.

"Yes, I'm sure of it, for he told me he expected to build her the home she was worthy of, and then announce the news of their marriage, but he got lower and lower. When the baby was a few weeks old, he held it in his arms and named it 'Lisita'. He got some better and went to a settler's cabin up the creek, but never got back. He lies in the buryin' ground near the schoolhouse where he taught.

"Did he speak of his wife and child before he died?" asked the detective.

"Yes, he called for me an' I went. He give me a little wooden box and bag of money and said to have the baby's picture taken when it was a year old, send one to his people acrost the waters to an address he gave, and put one in the box with what he had put in it, and give it to Polly. So I done as he said but Polly did

not live more'n a year and a half after this."

"What became of the precious box?" asked the detective.

"Well, I understood it went with the baby to Nancy Lake's."

"About how long ago was this?" asked the detective.

"Well, a little over fifteen years ago, I reckon. He said somethin' about her inheritin' a lot of money 'fore he died. It's all died down in this country, an' nothin' more is ever said about it."

"Do you think I could find a picture of this baby?" asked the detective.

"Why, sir! Why do you want the picture of a baby who is strange to you?" asked the old man.

"Oh, I'm unusually interested in your story, I guess, and just thought I would look at it if you had its picture," answered the detective.

"No picture could be found in this section unless at Nathan Lake's," answered the old man.

The conversation here drifted to other subjects, and the detective felt he was gaining ground and must leave no stone unturned. So

a few evenings later he visited the cabin of Nathan Lake. He posed as one who wanted pictures to enlarge and Nathan Lake beckoned to his wife Lucinda. She searched the old oaken chest to its very bottom and drew forth a small picture not unlike a daguerreotype clasped in a heavy frame. He took it to the light, unclasped it and found, as he held it to the one he had brought from across the sea, it was an exact type of it. To his great satisfaction, they did not allow him to take the picture away, lest it get lost.

"Where is this child now?" asked the detective.

"With her aunt. The last we heard from there, she was missing."

The detective had spent more than two months in that neighborhood, for the woodland paths and roads were blocked with snow and ice, and felt that he must be moving on. So early in March he turned his footsteps toward Nancy Lake's. When he reached her cabin he found it a place of contentment. School had closed at the Forks that day and Lisita and "Wip" were talking over the events of its closing. Nancy Lake sat at the loom and threw the shuttle swiftly from side

to side, which sped smoothly along, leaving the woof in its wake. Though they were wary of strangers, he assured them he was their friend. They watched him closely all the while. The next day he drew forth from his vest pocket, a baby's picture and handed it to Nancy Lake and asked if she had one to match it. Her eyes went wide for she thought the picture she had in the chest was the only one in existence.

"I shall prove to you later that I'm a friend of justice," said the detective.

At this Nancy Lake called for a candle, raised the lid of the old chest and slowly laid out articles after article from their musty hiding-place. Finally she reached the very bottom but no small box or picture was there. In consternation she turned to the detective, and said "That is my picture you have, but I don't know how you got it, for I am the only one that places or replaces the things in that chest."

"Madam, I assure you that I came into the possession of it honestly, though it was only loaned to me for a time, to accomplish a purpose. May be some unseen hand searched in your chest."

His words seemed to convey the truth and deeply convinced of it, her thoughts at once centered on the night when she thought she heard the heavy chest lid fall, arose and searched the house, but did not find or hear anything save the deep breathing of the stranger, who had stopped for a night's lodging. Then they told him the strange story of Lisita's concealment in the cave far away, of her old teacher, of her return and the words of her captor, "I will come for you again when all is ready."

"When did he take the girl to the cave-house?" asked the detective.

"Last June, and brought her back about the last of November, but he took good care to keep hid," answered Nancy Lake.

The detective, who now saw through the whole scheme, seemed very restless as he paced back and forth across the floor. The whole scheme of the treacherous villain, Robert Thompson, was an open book to him, but he was uneasy now for fear some cruel death would come to the grand old man before he could reach him. He would not come for Lisita, the only heir, until all was ready for their flight across the sea, and to get ready

for that flight meant death or concealment for the heirs of the gold and estates. He beckoned to Lisita who sat near, and as she came closer he said "If you would look at the likeness of your own grandfather, come near."

Lisita stood like a statue for before her was the picture of her old teacher and friend. "Grandfather!" she said softly. "How can it be?"

"You are not Lisita Lake, but Lisita Alexander, the legitimate heir to William Henry Alexander's fortune. This will be proven later."

Then he showed her the picture of Thompson, Joan and Jamie Campbell, and so natural did they look that she almost felt she was back in Cave Hollow. But if she should ever return to the cave, could she be so happy again?"

"Little girl, look here," said the detective, and as he turned the lapel of his coat, Lisita saw a badge.

"If we can find two fast horses, I will run a race with you to Cave Hollow," said the detective, and Lisita who was so anxious to

rescue her Grandfather, said "Let's start in the morning."

In a moment, "Wip," who had listened closely to the conversation, was off to a neighbor's to borrow a horse, for the detective, for he expected to follow them on old kit. Nancy Lake busied herself getting things in readiness for an early breakfast, and a bountiful lunch that was to be packed in the saddle-pockets. She had some satisfaction in the thought that soon the wrongdoer would be brought to justice.

The next morning at sunrise, Lisita and the man who wore a red handkerchief around his neck, were riding swiftly toward Cave Hollow, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles, while the boy, who had gotten consent from Nancy Lake, to follow them, kept a few yards in the rear on old kit, for fear some evil fate might befall the girl.

They were making good time and each hour brought them several miles nearer to Cave Hollow, where strange things were taking place.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOCTOR COEWELL PRACTICES MEDICINE.

Victor Coewell stood on the deck of the boat and watched the waves as they receded in their escalloped path. He was getting tired of the slow motion of the boat, for he was anxious to reach his destination, so he could be with Dr. Brooks, the old teacher and friend who had led him so gently into the paths of the science that deals with diseases of the human body. Constance, the daughter of his teacher, was his friend, but could never be more than a friend to him. He had promised to write her, and had kept his promise, but now that the only girl he had ever loved was lost to him, he must discard the idea of marriage for awhile. When he reached the station Dr. Brooks was there to meet him, though he was really on his way to make a call and stopped at the station, so that his young friend might accompany him to the bedside of his patient.

The doctor was polite, talkative and friendly as usual but Coewell could see a marked change in his looks. The hard work, sleepless nights and mental strain was telling on the old doctor. Victor relieved him of many calls during the winter, and returned to Coehern early in the Spring. He never forgot the old doctor's parting words as he presented him with a pair of saddle bags with "horn balances and china mortar: "Be true to your work and be a man in the profession."

When Victor returned home he found Sambo plowing the potato patch. His father and the fisherman were taking up the potatoes in the garden. Eph was raking and piling refuse to burn. His mother was spinning, Rachel's daughter was doing the housework and Rachel was making soap. The lye had been drained from the ashes in the hopper and was placed in a large iron kettle hanging on a pole, held up by two forked stakes in the ground. As much soap-grease or refuse meat scraps was added to the lye, as it would "eat up" or dissolve, then it was boiled till done and stirred with a sassafras stick. And Aunt Rachel's voice was heard above the shouts of Tom to his oxen, saying "Hurry up, yo' lazy

nigger—doan yo' done let dat soap bile ober, or dead peoples' clo'es will be washed wid it."

Smoke was issuing from the old smoke-house where the meat was being smoked with cobs, hickory and sassafras wood. The Coxes were still at Coewells and they expressed a desire to visit Nancy Lake before they returned to their home across the sea. Victor, who was anxious for a trip, and had it in mind to find a suitable location for himself, promised to take them soon. He seemed restless and dissatisfied. After this arrangement, he followed the narrow path that led to the picket fence on the river bank, for a walk on the shore of the river, and its placid and peaceful waters seemed to have soothed his vague unrest as he stood on the sand-bar with its numerous shells and pebbles, or traversed the narrow path to the overhanging rocks and trees, higher up on its banks. When he started homeward he was met by one of the servants who told him the fisherman's daughter was very sick, and wanted him to come over. On hearing this he looked very grave, as he rode off to the fisherman's hut. He knew Mollie had been suffering from pain in her right side but thought she was better.

When he reached her bedside he stood with saddle pockets in his hand by the unconscious form of his friend and early playmate. He pronounced her illness inflammation of the stomach and used hot poultices, while no doubt she suffered from a ruptured appendix which had caused peritonitis.

The old fisherman sat close by and watched with eager eyes, every movement of the stalwart form and steel nerve of their physician and friend as he stood by the bedside of Mollie and battled with death. The stillness in the cottage was broken by a loud "Hello!" outside. The fisherman went to the door and a voice in the night said "Is Dr. Coewell here? My wife is awful sick and I want him to come over on Bear Run as quick as he can. It is full ten miles from here, and tell him if he wants company on the trip, to come on, 'cause I got to go."

At this, Victor, who heard the conversation arose to go. He told the woman at Mollie's bedside to watch her closely for she was gradually growing weaker all the time. He stood at the door with medicine case and hat in hand as he turned and gazed on the unconscious form of the fisherman's daughter, who

had been his lifelong playmate and friend, and then went out into the night.

They crossed the field, following a path that led them to Coewell's home. When they came up even with the house, Victor alighted quickly and walked up to the door and into the sitting room where a sweet faced woman sat at table, sewing. She raised her eyes and smiled as Victor entered, and the man outside saw by the candle light, that look of confidence between mother and son, that tie of love and trust that binds true families together and he knew it was home indeed.

"Mother, call Rachel, and go over to the fisherman's and stay awhile, for I fear Mollie is dying."

At this he closed the door, mounted his horse and rode quietly away by the side of the man in waiting, but in the stillness and beauty of that long moonlight ride, his thoughts were back in the fisherman's hut. The loud barking of a dog gave evidence of their nearness to the home he was going to visit. They alighted and the man led the horses away to the stable, while Victor made friends with the dog and found his way into the house, where his patient lay on a home-

made bedstead, with mattress of straw, while a bouncing baby boy lying near seemed to be trying to get its fist into its mouth. He smiled at this as the old lady by the bedside said: "We don't need you now, Doc, but bein's you're here, you kin see if she's adoin' alright."

He looked at his watch—it was half past twelve—then felt her pulse, lowered her head, and said: "Grandma, I'll beat you yet. Where are this baby's clothes, and a pan of hot water?"

These were hastily brought and if ever a baby was washed and dressed in "flannen" and "linsey," this one was.

"Now, what do you think of this, Grandma!" said Dr. Coewell, as he held the newly dressed arrival out on his two hands.

"Well, I'll declare, Doc, you're as handy as a woman," said "Granny," as she brought in the stilliards to weigh it. "Ten pounds," the doctor said, as he carefully raised the cover and placed it by its mother's side. The mother was pleased to see the kindly interest which Dr. Coewell showed toward her and baby, and she felt safe under his trusty care. To the father, who was bending over a trun-

dle bed to see if the two other children were covered, he said "This means another plate at the table, another chair by the fireside. 'A man never has a family till he gets a house full of children'."

"That's so, Doc, that's so, and we never have one to spare, no difference how many."

They paid him three dollars and a half, his charges, and he started home about two hours before daylight. He reached home just as they were eating breakfast, but before he entered the dining room the smell of ham, eggs and coffee told him the meal was ready. He walked in and said—"Mother, I have a new namesake."

Aunt Rachel, who was laying a plate for him, and pouring cream in a cup for his coffee, said "Laws a massy! what do dey call him? Doc or Vick?"

At this they smiled, and his mother told him that Mollie was dead. Strange to say, just as one soul left its habitation here below, another was ushered into this world. Life and Death—how strange. How fleeting is Life. Within a circle we scarcely realize it until the breathing has ceased and one is gone, never to return again to the wandering vicisi-

tudes of this earthly pilgrimage. Otherwise at a birth, to the circle is added one, and when we look around again a new life has taken up its abode on this earth.

Victor went upstairs to bed and slept until noon, when he arose and dressed himself and went to the barn shed where his father and some other men, were making a pine coffin, lining and covering it with black cloth. He walked to where the old fisherman was standing and told him he must come to live with them ,since he was left alone.

Along in the evening a dozen or more neighors were coming from various directions to the fisherman's hut so they might assist in the singing, and be company in the home that Death had visited, and all through the long hours of the night, songs floated out from the hut on the river bank and died away on the restless breeze.

Early the next morning the funeral procession started on the road leading to the old mill and when they arrived at Millgrove, people could be seen coming from all directions on horseback. After a long funeral sermon by Hoden Adams (who was an exhorter at that time) and the song, beginning—

Oh, come, come with me
To the old Churchyard
For I well know the path
Through the soft, greensward,"

they laid Mollie to rest by the side of her mother, where the glory of the sunset lingered at eventide, where the aeolian murmurings of the wind in the pines floated o'er her, ever and ever throughout quiet, dreamless sleep, where the wild flowers grew in profusion and where the myrtle and the ivy intermingled to weave a covering of living green for her narrow bed: where the wandering nightbird sought shelter in the branches of the pines to sing its evening song, and where glad nature ever whispered of the true and the living God.

Some of the people who were at the burying, went home with others for supper, which made them late getting home. As they passed the old mill, some said they heard something that sounded like a tame pigeon—others said it sounded like a woman or a child crying. At least they all agreed that the low, weird sound was vey strange.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A VOYAGE ACROSS THE SEA.

During the first days of March, great preparations were made in Cave Hollow, for the return across the sea. The school that had been kept for the past three months, would close on the sixth, and only a very few scholars attended at its close. Robert Thompson had at last earned a little money, and lived above suspicion. No one visited Cave Hollow often, since the old man and his daughter had left so suddenly, as the neighbors thought, for they did not know he was still there, so closely was he guarded. The evening before the close of school, everything was in readiness for their trip. Robert Thompson confronted William Alexander, and said "Old man, your time is about up, and you'd better get ready to hand in your check, for the potion is brewing that makes a man keep silent forever on this earth."

The old man realized now, as he fastened

him in the cave and bolted the door, that there was nothing in store for him but death. He lit a candle and explored the hidden passageways of the cave, leading in various directions, but no outlet could be found. He longed to see his home across the sea again, but his longings were in vain. Exhausted and weary he wrapped a bear-skin about him, and with his coat for a pillow, fell into a peaceful sleep. In his dreams his youth had returned, and he was back in the old mansion across the sea—then again he was walking in their quiet grounds with his wife by his side, holding his son William in her arms, but his dreams came to an end abruptly and he opened his eyes to see Robert Thompson, who was rudely pulling his arm.

"Come on, old man. Sign these papers. This is the last favor I ask of you, for I never expect to see you alive again." And the truth is, he never did. The old man would not sign the papers and Thompson shoved him down on the bear-skin, bound and gaged him and after signing the papers himself, so that no one would have guessed it was any one's signature only Mr. Alexander's he went on to Millgrove. He carried a lunch in one hand,

and a mattock in the other. When he had gone about one hundred yards from the cave he turned from the path into a dense thicket, where he marked off a place and began to dig a pit. About nine o'clock he went on to the school house, opened school, received the balance due him on tuition that the parents had sent him by their children, dismissed, ate his lunch, closed the school house and returned to finish the pit.

Joan Campbell had prepared the poison drink from the deadly nightshade, a European plant, a species of which grows in America. There was not more than a small half glass of it, but less than that would have done the work. With glass in hand she was unbolting the cave door when she heard the sound of hoof beats coming up the path. To her surprise there stood Lisita and a strange man. Joan Campbell looked guilty but offered no more resistance than a child when the detective took the glass from her hand, poured its contents into a bottle and put it in his hip pocket. She seemed to be seized with sudden fear, or insanity, turned and fled screaming to the house above the cave. Lisita unbolted the cave door and stood before the

old man. They cut the ropes that bound him, and removed the gag, and the old gentleman could hardly believe his eyes as Lisita drew nearer, threw her arms about his neck, and said, "Grandfather! I do not call you this out of respect for older people, but you really are my grandfather."

"How so, little one? I had always thought you resembled my people in actions, manner and looks, but never expected to see you again."

"Poor father is dead," said Lisita.

Then William Alexander knew that the tie that had bound him to this country, was severed by the death of his son—he could do no more than be a father to the orphan girl. A sudden thought filled his mind, and his eyes glowed with a light she had never seen before.

"You shall be amply rewarded for this," said he, to the detective who had shown his badge.

"Will you fly with me, little one, far away, where there is ample room and plenty in store?"

"Anywhere, Grandfather, that you wish to go," answered Lisita.

Lisita beckoned to "Wip" who had arrived

on old Kit, and told him to hitch the ponies to the covered wagon, as the old man had bid her do. They had been purchased with his money and belonged to him. The old man knew where they had placed the gold and valuables, together with the small wooden box, preparatory to their departure after they should have securely hidden his dead body. He would not touch the so-called wine, which had been drugged, and Joan Campbell had been instructed to pour this drink down his throat while he was bound and gagged, and lying on his back.

With the agility of a mouse, William Alexander searched for the valuables, placed them in a large leather wallet, took the old violin from its peg on the wall, placed it in the case, handed it to Iisita, who had made him a cup of tea. He drank the tea, with one look at the old cedar chest, closed the cave door and took his seat by Lisita in the covered wagon, and they were off down the hollow, forded the river and left the Indian cave and the old mill far behind. The detective, who had heard their plans, told them he would follow later. Just now he feared Robert Thompson might get wind of their arrival, and he fol-

lowed the path leading in the direction of Millgrove. All at once he stopped short, for he was sure he heard a mattock strike a rock, as though someone were digging in the ground. He first thought it might be someone digging ginsing, snake-root, rattle root, or some other herbs that were used at that time for medicine, but he must not suppose things! So far he had left no stone unturned, and would not now. So he crept cautiously in the direction of the sound, quietly advancing through the thick underbrush and finally came to a little opening where he could see and not be seen. He saw a man standing waist deep in a pit, and still digging deeper. The digger stopped and looked in every direction, as though he were afraid someone might see through the dense thicket, wiped the sweat from his face, climbed out of the pit, put on his coat, took up the mattock and started toward the path in the hollow. When he reached the path in the hollow, the detective who now had a better view of the "would be teacher" could see that his clothes were clinging to him with moisture which he did not then clearly understand, but learned later that it was the result of a ducking given

him by the pupils at the mill pond on refusing to treat, on the last day of school. After he was far enough away, the detective went on to the pit, which was about six feet long and two feet wide. A shovel lay on the pile of dirt he had thrown out. "By jove! a fine resting place for a wealthy poet and scholar," said the detective, in a whisper. Only one minute had elapsed since the grave digger had departed, and so anxious was the detective to watch his every movement, that he had scarcely gone twenty yards on the path leading to the cave, when a stealthy figure followed in his footsteps. When Thompson reached the cave the heavy door was wide open. He dropped his mattock on the ground and entered. In a moment he ran out and on toward the house, muttering wicked oaths, and when he reached the house he found no one except Joan Campbell who was dying from the draught she had so carefully prepared for another. So intent on escape was he, as he ran back to the cave, that he failed to see the boy and an officer of the law, standing behind a clump of trees, with their horses grazing close by. When he re-entered the cave, the wily detec-

tive who had secreted himself behind the door, while Robert Thompson was viewing the form of Joan Campbell, stepped inside and found him kneeling in front of the old chest, throwing things in every direction. He was looking for something he could not find! The detective walked up, put his hand on Thompson's shoulder, who looked up astonished to see a badge on the lapel of a coat worn by a man he had met before. He jumped to his feet and showed fight, but the detective, who was too quick for him, backed a little, drew a revolver from his pocket and leveled it at him. Robert Thompson saw the game was up, and threw up his hands.

The officer of the law, who was standing outside, had witnessed it all, and advanced and put handcuffs on Thompson. The detective searched the chest to see if all valuable papers had been secured. Jamie Campbell who had been left on guard that day, forgot his mission and followed the ridges far away from the cave so that he might hear the loud yelping of the deerhound, who was in hot pursuit after a deer or a fox. When he returned in the evening, the men were returning from the thicket, where they had laid Joan Camp-

bell in the pit, while Robert Thompson, bound and handcuffed, lay in the cave, with the door securely bolted. When Jamie heard the story he was deeply grieved and said, "Granny wouldn't 'a done it if he hadn't 'a made her. I'll stay and take care of the cow and pigs. Ole Tray and me aint afraid, are we Tray?" as he patted the large deerhound on the head.

The boy builded fires and helped them prepare supper. Robert Thompson was brought up to the house, given refreshment, placed in the middle of the floor, on a blanket and more wood was placed on the fire, the door securely bolted and the men went to bed and fell into a sound sleep. Toward morning the detective was aroused by a noise and jumped out of bed just in time to see Robert Thompson jump from the window and disappear in the darkness. The detective and constable jumped into their clothes, ran to the stable, found one of the horses gone, and set out on the other in hot pursuit.

"He has got a few minutes start on us but I think we can overtake him," said the detective.

"If I get my clutches on him again, I'll see

that he don't git loose again," said the constable.

They took the most direct way to Clarksburg. Robert Thompson had led one of the horses a little way from the stable and stood still till he heard the sound of the hoofbeats of their horse grow fainter and fainter, and could be heard no more. He hitched the horse, went in and got his reakfast, then set out for Nancy Lake's. He did not know who had secreted the old man but he hoped to find Lisita and flee with her, where no one would find them.

When the detective reached Clarksburg he found that one passenger had bought a ticket for New York, but all he could learn was that it was a man, and the train had gone a few hours before. They talked it over and decided to board the next train going East. When they arrived at New York they found at the pier that an old man and a girl had taken passage on a ship bound for England, that morning. They watched every vessel that sailed so closely for a few days, that they knew the name of every one who took passage, and their destination.

Next morning a feeble looking, gray haired

man, walking with a cane, was making his way to the docks. The ship was about to sail out of the harbor, when the detective saw the old-looking man walk briskly up the gang-plank. The detective was the next to reach the vessel, followed by the constable. The detective overtook him, placed his hand on his shoulder, and when he turned a pistol was pointed at him. The constable jerked off his wig, placed handcuffs on him and he was safely locked in a room by the ship's officer.

"I'll leave him in your hands," said the constable, as he jumped ashore, and the vessel slowly steamed out of the harbor.

Robert Thompson had not found Lisita at Nancy Lake's, as he expected to, after his long ride, so he must return to England alone. He did not know where the old man was, but he would return and take charge of the estate, which he knew so well—but things took a decided turn a minute after he boarded the vessel.

"Wip" rode behind, taking turn about on each horse until they came within a few miles of Clarksburg. Here they gave him some money and left him with the horses which he was to return to Nancy Lake. He reached

home the next evening and handed a note to Nancy Lake, from Lisita, which he had guarded with care all through the journey.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SECRET UNFOLDED.

It was sugar-making time at Coehern. Victor Coewell was down by the river where a dozen or more maple trees stood high up on its bank. Large wooden buckets and jars were sitting around on the ground near the body of the tree, to catch the "sugar-water" as it dripped from the long spiles, one end of which had been inserted in the round holes bored in the tree by an auger. Higher up on the bank where the meadow skirted the river bank, two large iron kettles filled with sap, were hanging from a pole, held up by two stakes in the ground. A fire was kept burning under the kettles, and as the water boiled down, more was collected from the buckets under the maple trees and added to that of the kettles. Kegs of molasses and great quantities of sugar were made each spring.

The fisherman, who stayed most of his time now at Coewell's, was assisting them in sugar-

making. Victor walked up to where he was standing by the seething, foaming kettles, whose contents had reached boiling point, by the art of an experienced hand in building fires and placing the wood so the flames burned all around the kettles, and said "Uncle Jim, I am not satisfied here any more, and since I am able to practice medicine, I feel that I must find a suitable location."

"Wall, I spose that's so, but I hate to lose ye, boy. I've knowed ye since ye wuz a baby, and it'll seem lonesome wi'out ye but the world is wide, and I hope ye'll find as good a neighborhood as the one ye wuz raised in, 'fore ye locate for sure," answered the fisherman.

With this he left the fisherman and walked through the meadow toward the house, whistling a tune as he followed the path. He went in the house and had a talk with the Coxes who had decided to return to their home across the sea after a visit to Nancy Lake, where the brother had directed them to go. If they could not learn anything there, in regard to their brother-in-law, they would return home.

"How would it suit you to start this afternoon?, asked Victor.

"The best in the world, sir," answered Mr. Cox.

An early dinner was served and Roanne Coewell told them they must come back with Victor and eat some of the maple syrup and sugar. So they decided to leave everything except what they would need on the trip. About half past eleven they drove out of sight in the lane by the picket fence, along the river.

After Lisita and the detective set out on their journey to Cave Hollow, with the boy following close behind, Nancy Lake put the cabin in order and then took her seat at the loom that almost filled one side of the cabin. She threw the shuttle swiftly so that she might finish the beautiful woolen cloth that had been in the loom for some time. The snowy white yarn had been dyed with indigo, and the cloth woven out of it was a deep or dark shade of blue. This cloth was for Lisita's dress for early Spring, after which she would change to a linen for the warmer days. Nancy Lake sat at the loom till four o'clock in the afternoon when she began to feel

hungry. She threw more wood on the fire and while it was burning into coals, she mixed dough for a sweet pone of bread. She set the oven on the hearth, placed coals of fire under it, and when the grease with which she had saturated the inside of the oven, began to hiss, she pourned in the dough, put on the lid, placed hot coals on top of it and more coals underneath the oven. Then she went to the spring to get fresh water and when she returned the scent of the sweet pone filled the little cabin. Just as she was spreading the cloth, she looked through the tiny window of her kitchen and saw a handsome young man and an elderly couple drive up in a spring wagon. She walked to the door-way and stood, ready to give directions to the people drawing near, who must have lost their way for they were all strangers to her. They stopped a little way from the gate and the young man on the front seat gave the reins to the elderly man, alighted and walked to the door. He raised his hat and told her his name was Coewell.

"Yes, I have heard Lisita speak of the Coewells."

At the name Lisita, Coewell smiled and asked who Lisita was.

"She's a girl I raised—my sister's girl. But come in, all of you. I will be glad to have company, since they are all gone."

Coewell wondered as he went back to the wagon, who Nancy Lake meant when she said "they," but this Lisita could not be the one he knew for she had told him in her letters she was going to live with her people in Pennsylvania. When he reached the wagon, he climbed into the seat, drove through the big gate into the stable lot, helped the Coxes alight, preceded them to the door in which Nancy Lake was standing, and introduced them to her. When they went in and found seats he asked Nancy Lake where he should put the horses.

"Just unhitch and put them in the stable. You will find hay in the loft and corn in the crib," answered Nancy Lake.

She then waited on the Coxes who were already exchanging pleasant remarks about how good the sweet pone smelled. Then she told them that her boy and girl had left early that morning, how she had worked until she

felt hungry, and as she was alone had not built a fire in the kitchen stove.

"No bread ever was so good, madam, as that which is baked in an oven," said Mr. Cox.

By this time Victor had returned from putting the horses away. Seeing Nancy Lake was alone, he asked if he could assist her in doing th echores after supper.

"The boy always gets the wood and water when he is here. He filled the box last night, but we may need a little more," said she.

Victor went to the spring and brought two buckets of water, then replenished the woodbox. Nancy liked the appearance of the handsome, industrious fellow and wished Lisita was at home. After supper they all sat around the fire. Coewell asked the Coxes how they were feeling after their long drive.

"Fine — never felt better," replied Mr. Cox, "though I guess Mrs. Cox is rather tired."

"Do you know a good location for a doctor?" asked Coewell, addressing Nancy Lake.

"I expect Troy would be a good place. It is three or four miles from here. Are you a doctor?"

"That's my profession, but somehow I can't find a location to suit me."

Nancy Lake was indeed proud to have such noble guests, and sincerely wished her little girl was there to meet them. Coewell was looking steadily toward the mantel where his eyes rested on a picture. He took it down and looked long and ardently at the fac simile of the brown eyed maiden whom he had once chosen for his wife. Then his thoughts flew back to Cave Hollow and the joyous days of the log-rolling, house-raising and the husking-bee, which were only shadows now.

"Whose picture is this?" asked Coewell.

Then Nancy Lake took the picture from his hand, though he seemed reluctant to give it up, and said — "It is Lisita, my niece. She had it taken last month. She always went by the name of Lake, but her right name is Alexander." Then she told them the strange story of Lisita's disappearance, her return, of the school she had taught, of the detective, his strange story, and how they were on their way to Cave Hollow. Coewell listened intently but felt like one in a dream.

"Father did not sell the land till in the Fall," said Coewell.

"Yes, but they lived in a cave for two or three months," said Nancy Lake.

"Well, I'll declare! Lisita's teacher then, is my brother-in-law," said Mr. Cox.

"Oh, can it be true?" asked Mrs. Cox.

Coewell understood the whole situation, straightened himself to his six feet of height, and said "I am going to start for Cave Hollow early in the morning."

After they went to bed, Nancy Lake took a candle, went to the hen-house, selected two nice fowls, dressed and roasted them before she went to bed. About four o'clock she heard someone moving about the house. She dressed and came out to find a blazing fire on the hearth and the tea kettle boiling on the stove. This had been done by Coewell who wished that he too, might be an adopted son of Nancy Lake. In an hour or two all was ready, with lunch packed for their trip to Cave Hollow, and by good daylight they were two miles on the road.

"I fear you are driving a little fast, Doctor," said Mr. Cox.

Coewell looked back and saw Mrs. Cox

with a tight grip on her husband's arm. He smiled at this and slackened their pace some, but still made good time.

"To think that rascal would conceal Will, to get his fortune," said Mr. Cox to his wife.

"Yes, and no doubt he will take Will's life. I heard he shot a man in a gambling den just before he disappeared so suddenly from England," answered Mrs. Cox.

"I am afraid some harm will come to the girl before we can reach her," said Coewell.

They stopped with Nancy Lake's brother, as she had told them to do, if they reached there before dark. About an hour before dusk he consulted the map he carried and guessed they must be close to the place to which she directed them. Another half hour's drive brought them to a house like Nancy Lake had described as the home of her brother. He told them it was eighty-five miles from his place to Nancy Lake's. He also told them that a man, young lady and a boy had stayed there the night before and left before sunrise, that morning.

"Can we get an early start in the morning?" asked Coewell.

"Yes, sir. As early as you please," answered the host.

Coewell sincerely wished he might have been a day earlier but with this eighty-five miles the first day, they could easily reach their destination the next day before dark. The next morning everything was in readiness and they moved along at a good pace all day, and more than an hour before dark they came in sight of the old mill. When they had passed it, Victor turned the horses into the narrow road that had been nothing more than a footpath, a few months before. As he drove along, pleasant memories returned, and his hopes were high in anticipation of seeing the only girl he had ever loved, in a few minutes, for he did not doubt for a moment that she was there. When they drove up to the house in Cave Hollow, stillness reigned over all — a stillness that filled him with fear. He alighted, threw the reigns to Mr. Cox, ran up to the house and knocked on the door, but no one answered. He could see a fire blazing on the hearth then went down to the cave and after peering through its dark recesses, he discovered a letter and on looking at it, he saw it was from Lisita to him. He walked

down the narrow path that led to Millgrove, and when he had gone a little way, he saw Jamie Campbell coming out of the bushes. On seeing Coewell, he said "Oh, sir, come and see poor Granny's grave." Not knowing what the boy meant, Victor followed him till they came to a long narrow mound, covered with moss. "I just covered it with this purty moss. She'll be all right, sir, for these nice trees'll make a shade and shelter her from the rain, and all the pretty flowers'll bloom for her, and the wind in the tree-tops'll sing for her, and the squirrels'll play around. Granny wouldn't 'a done it if he hadn't made her."

Coewell, who was touched by the boy's words, had heard a part of the story and asked what had become of the rest of them.

"The old man and the girl left in the covered wagon. Think they was going acrost the sea — and a man put handcuffs on Uncle, but he got away and they're after him."

"Put your fire out and go home with us," said Coewell. Filled with fear lest the villain would overtake the old man and Lisita, he told the rest of the story to the Coxes on their way home from Cave Hollow.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN A FOREIGN LAND.

It was not noon when Lisita and her grandfather left Cave Hollow, seated comfortably in the covered wagon, drawn by the two swift ponies, and such good time did they make that they reached Clarksburg the next evening in time to dispose of their wagon and ponies before the east bound train arrived. They reached New York and took passage on the first ship that sailed for England, and were many miles out at sea when the detective reached New York in pursuit of Robert Thompson. The town, with its many houses, the ships and the great body of water they sailed upon, that always looked higher in the distance, seemed a beautiful vision to Lisita.

Her grandfather was ever by her side, telling her stories of the sea, of the monsters that are said to lie in its hidden depths, of the icebergs that break off and slide away from the mighty glaciers in the North, and travel

in the ship's path, three-fourths under water all along the northern route, and of God who holds the sea and its hidden creatures in the hollow of His hand.

"Oh, how beautiful," said Lisita, as she saw a vessel in the distance that looked like a tiny white speck in the ocean.

"Yes, it is beautiful. The sea is calm now, a mighty sheet of water spreading away for miles in every direction, though it looks quite different in a storm, when the great billows roll so high and meet above the vessel and dash their foam on its deck, like it did on my first voyage," answered her grandfather.

"How long will it take us to cross?" asked Lisita.

"Well, it depends on the sea. If it is calm we can make the voyage in about four weeks. If the sea is rough, it will take longer."

They had a wonderful voyage and reached London early in April. William Alexander hired a hansom and they were driven to his old home. He alighted and led Lisita through the beautiful grounds, up the gravel walks to the old mansion. Though the flowers and grounds had been neglected, they still looked beautiful. The house had been locked up and

deserted, but he still carried a key in his pocket, which he had carried through all his mysterious journey. He unlocked the doors, opened the shutters, threw up the windows, built a fire in the dining-room and a room up stairs, which he assigned to Lisita.

"The whole house is yours, little one, but this room is yours individually," said her grandfather.

Lisita was left alone for a time, while her grandfather walked across to where one tenant was still occupying a house on his grounds. He sent him in quest of servants and tenants with the result that in two weeks' time, the house and grounds were put in order, and his own horses and livery were in the stables for use. She looked around from room to room and could hardly find her way in the large old house, so very unlike the cabin in which she was reared. She stopped before a Coat of Arms emblazoned on the wall, and then before a beautiful picture of the Madonno which hung on the wall, and was an imitation of the one drawn by Raphael. Then she paused by the picture of a motherly-looking, slender woman, close by a young man who was handsome and tall.

Just then her grandfather who had returned from his walk across the grounds to secure help, touched her on the shoulder and said, "That is your grandmother when she was young, and your father when he was twenty-one, just before he left England."

As she gazed on the picture, it seemed almost that they were speaking to her, and she wished they might be with her now. The tenant had brought supplies, and Lisita had prepared supper and was putting the house in order when two servants arrived. In a few days a dressmaker arrived, bringing some beautiful cloth to make a dress and riding suit, and some fine pink goods and lace to make an evening gown for Lisita. She was given a horse for her own use, and so well could she ride that she scoured the country for miles around and she thought if her Aunt Nancy knew it she would say Lisita was "idling all of her time away."

The people in London circles were much interested in an account they had seen in the papers of William Henry Alexander, who had suddenly disappeared from his home and estates in England almost two years ago, and had recently returned from America,

bringing with him a young and beautiful granddaughter. After some persuasion by his friends, the old gentleman decided to have a ball or social early in May, so that his granddaughter might become acquainted with some of the lords and ladies of the land.

Doctor Coewell, on reaching home, remembered the letter he had accidently found in the darkest corner of the cave, in a crevice of rock. It was not in an envelope but seemed destined to reach the owner after its long concealment. Sambo took care of the horses and Victor sat down on a log in the woodyard to find the meaning of the letter. He was not surprised now to know that through treachery and concealment he had been robbed of much happiness, since he had learned the true mission of the one who had falsely planted himself in their neighborhood as a teacher and neighbor. But the great message the letter carried to him was that she whom he loved, was true to him and loved none other.

"I must find her," thought he, as his nimble steps led him to the house. A pleasant smile lit up his countenance as he greeted his mother and the rest, then asked the Coxes in re-

gard to William Alexander's home. After a long conversation he announced his intention to cross the ocean.

"Well, sir, how would you like to sail with us? We shall not tarry longer than tomorrow morning. Our stay with you has been a pleasant one, and your unbounded hospitality cannot be surpassed the world over," said Mr. Cox.

"I am glad you have enjoyed your stay with us, and we have derived a lot of pleasure and satisfaction from your company," answered Cornelius Coewell.

"That sugar you make here is certainly fine and white," said Mr. Cox.

Then Roanne Coewell told them how at "boiling off" time, she added the beaten whites of eggs to make it clear.

"I feel that my mission in this country is completed now, except at New York. I have found my brother, and my brother-in-law has been found, and to think he was so near us all the time. I guess I aided some in the search when I informed the detective at the tavern about the land deal you made to a family last Fall," said Mr. Cox.

Victor told them of the letter which had

been concealed, and his fears lest some harm would come to Lisita and her grandfather before the villain could be caught.

"Doctor, I invite you as a guest, to accompany us across the sea. It will give you a better knowledge of the world you live in, and a little recreation before you settle down to practice medicine," said Mr. Cox.

"Thank you, sir, I will accept your invitation, if Mother is willing," answered Victor.

His mother was not quick to reply, for she thought of the long days and nights he would be out of sight of land on the great sea, where many had found a watery grave. But then she thought of the happiness the trip would give her son, and when their eyes met he knew he had won. She calmly nodded assent, and they started for Parkersburg the next morning.

"Laws a massy! I'se glad dem Coxes am departed fo' de odder sho' but long befo dey arribes dey am most certain to be sanken where its miles upon miles deep. An' now dem aigs dat had to be beaten in a glass mornin', noon and night, can be tucked to de market," said Aunt Rachel.

Sambo took the folks to Elizabeth in a

spring wagon, where they took a boat for Parkersburg. There they boarded a train for the East. Coewell was proud to live in a State where they were afforded such splendid means of travel, though the railroad from Grafton to Parkersburg had only been operating since 1857, a little over three years before. Their trip to New York was a pleasant one, and they spent a few days there, for Mr. Cox was looking after the Peter Noe Eestate but found it had been given over to P. P. Mast of New Jersey, who died very suddenly a few years later.

They were on the water a little over a month. The sea was rough but the vessel sailed slowly up the Thames River about the last of April and they were driven from the harbor to the home of Mr. Cox, which was about sixty miles from the Estates of William Henry Alexander. While Dr. Coewell was a guest at Mr. Cox's, they visited Ireland, Scotland and Wales. He loved the green valleys of Scotland, and the blue hills of Ireland, but again he thought of his own native state, its sturdy forest trees that had grown for centuries, of its valleys, rivers, and the oil that had just been discovered that year at

Rathbone. Early the next Spring thousands of people were settling there, to have a part in the great industry. This is where the town of Burning Springs now stands, taking its name from two springs, one about a quarter of a mile and one a mile from the mouth of a stream that divided the village and was called by the same name. These springs in which the gas seepages bubbled up were supposed to have been first discovered and lit by the Indians over which they roasted strips of venison while their war-hoop echoed from hill to hill, and the oil well that was drilled in in 1860 is still producing oil at this time, the beginning of the third decade of the twentieth century.

Mr. Cox picked up a London paper on their trip and called Dr. Coewell's attention to one of its pages that contained a sketch of William Alexander's return to England, with his granddaughter, announcing that a ball would be held there the twentieth of May.

"Only two weeks from now, and we must all go," said Mr. Cox.

"I do not feel that I could go without an invitation," said Dr. Coewell.

"Oh, yes, you can go as my guest, Will

would ask us in a minute if he knew we were back," said Mr. Cox.

Dr. Coewell decided to go for then he would have an opportunity to see Lisita and tell her of the letter he found in the cave, and many other things.

They learned a few days later that the detective had arrived with Robert Thompson and placed him in jail in London to await his trial for the murder of Patrick O'Neil in a gambling den, just before his disappearance from England, and for concealment of and attempted murder of William Henry Alexander. The whole story was out and people were anxiously awaiting the trial and its outcome.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A REST ON THE MILLROCK.

On the evening of the ball, in old England, everything was in readiness for the guests. Candles were sending forth their mellow light from the candelabra, long tables were spread with snowy white linen cloths, glasses of wine sparkled like so many jewels, in their brilliancy. Pots of ferns were spreading their green, slender fronds from pedestals in the hallway. A small platform had been reared and carpeted for the musicians. Lisita slowly descended the stairs, dressed in her pink evening gown. She was not altogether happy for the one she loved most was far away and no doubt loved someone else. She thought it was the fisherman's daughter and had not tarried long enough in Cave Hollow to learn of Mollie's death, but if she could have known the heart of her gallant lover, who was speeding to her over the moor, not ten miles away, she would have been su-

premely happy. To Lisita, as she gazed on the scene, everything seemed to be no more than light and beauty. The wine in the cups looked rich and red, but she would not drink it. The guests were beginning to arrive. Lisita received them cordially and assigned them to their proper places, but where was her grandfather? She had not seen him for two hours. She searched the house, then with the big dog at her heels, stepped nimbly over the grounds in search of him. In a sheltered corner, on a rustic seat she discovered him, enjoying his pipe.

"Why, Grandfather! You must come in. The guests are arriving and I was uneasy about you."

"I have only been here a little while—just since supper, but I will come," said her grandfather.

To him the time had seemed short, for his mind had been so occupied with the scenes of a far away land, where he had been taken as a captive. But after all, did he not love its natural beauty? While he sat on the rustic bench and looked through the branches of the trees at the old house, aglow with lights, he reviewed the scenes of Cave Hollow. The

cave in which he was concealed was not, after all, so different from the caves of Europe, in which primitive man took up his abode centuries ago. The sturdy trees that spread their leafy branches to beautify the woodland, were a sample of great strength and he felt a longing to again be near them. He loved the song of the little brook that danced over its rocky bed, onward in its channel a mile or more, till it reached the waters above the old mill. At evening time he heard the call of the whippoorwill and the nighthawk, while the whispering breeze had been music to his ear, for it was nature's voice ever telling of its hidden charms.

His son had left the Old World and found a resting place in the New World, so he too would go and seek a home where his son chose to live. Lisita was all he had now, and she had announced her intention to go back, so he would dispose of his property and accompany her. He told her his intentions as they walked through the grounds to the house. This made Lisita very happy but there was another surprise in store for her that evening. The ball was at its height when she saw her grandfather rush out and greet a

portly man in the hallway. He was a stranger to her, but just behind him was a tall man in evening dress in whom she could not be mistaken, and while her grandfather shook hands with him she at once pronounced him the most dignified and handsome guest of the evening. Lisita was talking to Lord Spencer, when Victor Coewell advanced, reaching out his hand and clasping hers, asking if he might not have the next dance. Though he did not dance, he took this means of obtaining her company. She was reserved and stood by the side of the lord until that dance was over, and as Dr. Coewell advanced, Lord Spencer bowed politely and sought another partner.

"You were not looking for uninvited guests, were you?" asked Victor.

"It is quite a surprise but I do not wish to be a burden to anyone," said Lisita.

"I assure you you are not a burden to me," answered Dr. Coewell.

"Then why did you write it?" asked Lisita.

"I did not," answered Victor.

They found a seat behind the palms and he drew forth an old letter telling her he had

found it concealed in the cave, and that its contents prompted him to cross the sea.

"You did not get my letter then?" asked Lisita.

"I got a letter, but not this one, telling me you wished to be released from your promise, but it did not call for an answer so I did not answer it," said Dr. Coewell.

"Yes, but I got a letter from you," said Lisita.

"There must be some mistake for I did not write to you," said Victor Coewell.

They decided that the one that had concealed her, had done likewise with the letters, and sent others in their stead. Many mysteries were solved to their satisfaction as they sat in that fern shaded bower. Some of the guests were leaving and Dr. Coewell looked at his watch, held it before Lisita, and as their eyes met a mutual smile covered each countenance, for it was after midnight. When they were seated at the table with some of the guests who had remained, Dr. Coewell drank a glass of wine, though he had not drank anything stronger than cider before. Lisita did not taste the wine — the cup was full, and as she sat by her lover she compared it to

her happiness, of which her heart was full.

After the guests were all gone, William Alexander announced to Mr. Cox, Dr. Coewell and Lisita, his intentions of leaving England.

"I am going to sell out for good. America will be my home," said Mr. Alexander.

Mr. Cox was somewhat surprised but told him if he was going to sell, that he would buy his estate for his son.

"Very well, sir, you may have them but you must pay the price," said Mr. Alexander.

"We'll not quarrel over that," said Mr. Cox.

In a few days the price was decided on, and a deed was made which conveyed all of the real estate and such personal property as Mr. Alexander did not wish to take with him to America, to Mr. Cox. Dr. Coewell and Lisita were together constantly, either riding, driving or walking through the grounds, but when the time came to move to America she saw that the pictures of her father and grandmother were securely packed, as well as many rare and quaint keepsakes. In three weeks they were ready for the voyage. As they sailed down the Thames, William Alexander turned his face to the land of his birth and bid it farewell forever.

Lisita and Dr. Coewell were watching the waves beat against the shore and listening to the murmur of the sea. Soon they were out of sight of land and their happy faces were turned homeward. They reached Parkersburg in July and many times in after years, spoke of their happy ocean voyage. Victor asked them to stop at his father's and rest a few days, and he would take them to Nancy Lake's. As they went up the river on a boat, they decided to do this for Mr. Alexander wished to make some arrangements about the land in Cave Hollow. When they reached Coehern, harvest time was at hand and the waving fields of ripening grain were gradually falling in rows as the mighty cradle wielded by the hand of man, made its broad swath.

Sambo, who was raking wheat, looked up and said " Marse Vick am a comin' and he hab dat li'l gal by his side and an ole man on de hine seat to watch 'em."

The men in the field looked up and saw them driving up the lane from the river. During their stay at Coewells, Mr. Alexander looked over the Deed for the land in Cave Hollow for he wished to be sure it had been

made to him. Jamie Campbell had been staying there, while he had been working at Coehern.

Lisita and her grandfather rode over to Cave Hollow one day to look over the place where they had met under such strange circumstances, and after all, where they had spent so many happy days. When they had mounted their horses to return, William Alexander raised his hand and moved it slowly around as if to survey the land in Cave Hollow, that reached to the summit of the hills around, and said, "It is yours, Lisita, for you have learned to love it, though it seems to shut you off from the world outside."

Lisita could hardly believe what she heard, and with a glad smile she rode off, with her grandfather following in the narrow path. On the way to Coehern, her mind was filled with thoughts of what a nice home it would make for her and her grandfather.

Dr. Coewell and his father had gone away on business for a day or two, and he had asked them to stay until their return, to go to Nancy Lake's. Lisita loved the broad fields and the river at Coehern, and her stay seemed

short. Mrs. Coewell admired her very much for she was full of life, industrious, neat and beautiful. Even the servants had learned to love her.

On the evening when they expected Mr. Coewell and Victor to return, a child in the neighborhood near Millgrove was taken suddenly ill, and Mrs. Coewell was sent for. Lisita went with Mrs. Coewell and her aunt, who was visiting there. It was late when they started home, and they were detained by stopping to talk with people on the road. When they reached Millgrove it was after dark and it would have been much nearer to go across the hill from there, but it was a dense woods on either side, with narrow path between. They decided to go around the road by the old mill, for rattlesnakes might lurk in their pathway if they went across the hill. It was about nine o'clock when they reached the old mill and they sat down on the old millrock to rest. A bright moonlight shone all around. They had rested a few minutes when they looked up the road and saw a man coming. Mrs. Coewell said, "It is Victor or Cornelius, who has come across the

hill to meet us, and not finding us he has taken this road to overtake us."

They waited a few minutes, and all they could see was a girl coming toward them, dressed in black, who seemed to get smaller as she advanced. She knelt down in front of some cows in the road and made a mournful noise.

"That thing acts very strange," said Mrs. Coewell's aunt.

"That's just what I was thinking," said Mrs. Coewell. "Will you go with me to it?" But her aunt and Lisita would not go. The form arose and walked to the bank by the old mill, uttering the same cry and they hastened homeward to relate their strange experience. On their way to the ferry they met four men, spoke to them and passed on but soon heard footsteps approaching from behind, and, on looking around saw two men coming at a rapid gait after them. The women ran as fast as they could in order to reach the ferry and ring the ferry-bell if anyone tried to harm them. They reached home in safety and told their story which has been retold, almost forgotten, and then revived again. When Cornelius Coewell heard it, he said, "You all tell

the same story, and your ghost got smaller instead of larger all the time, and that is very strange for a ghost story." All slept soundly at Coehern that night except Mrs. Coewell who told how sleep would not come to her and how she lay awake all night watching, listening, waiting for the nocturnal apparia-tion which never came.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SUNSHINE AFTER SHADOWS.

Lisita's happy stay at Coehern came to a sudden close on the following Monday, when Sambo drove the spring wagon around to the front gate and Dr. Coewell, with a smile, led her out, took her hand in his and assisted her in getting upon the high seat, with springs, then climbed in and took his place by her side. Sambo and her grandfather occupied the front seat and a basket of dinner was shoved under it.

The Coewell's stood in the yard and waved goodbye as the party drove down the lane. All the world seemed glad to Lisita now and so very different from the times when she awoke to find herself in a cave, and each day seemed to add to her happiness. Dr. Coewell, too, remembered the time when he strolled by the river, and darkness was all he seemed to see on the horizon. But what a change since he had found the truth and had someone

to love and care for. After this trip, which proved to be a very pleasant one, he must settle down and build a home for her who would make it a home indeed—where love would drive trouble away and bring cheer and happiness to his fireside on his returns from his long rides to allay the sufferings of his patients.

When they arrived at Nancy Lake's they found her and "Wip" in the midst of harvest. She was glad indeed, to see Lisita but was a little distant with the young doctor at first, for she had found the cold letter to Lisita, with his name on it, which Lisita had hidden between the logs of their cabin. When Lisita searched for it, she could not find it and went to her Aunt Nancy. She soon found it, and frowned as Lisita ran to Dr. Coewell with it. He read it and said, "A wonderful letter. Should I have tried, and wished to write such a letter, I could not have done better. I suppose you believed it?"

"I surely did. I could not do otherwise," said Lisita.

As he tore the letter into shreds he walked to her side and said "Can you not learn to trust a fellow? Never again believe me un-

true, never forget the one who loves you, and is loyal to you at all times. Will you be—"

Just then Nancy Lake came in and Lisita explained matters to her. When she found out the truth she said, "If they have any more such men across the sea, I hope they'll keep them there." Dr. Coewell and Lisita were amused at her reply. They spent the time looking at pictures and keepsakes that had lain in the old chest for years, while Nancy Lake prepared dinner, and he finished the question he started to ask when she came in — "mine forever?"

After dinner Victor rode over to Troy, decided to locate there, and rented an office. He started for Coehern early the next morning with Lisita's promise to be his wife uppermost in his heart.

A few minutes after the women's experience at the old mill, a crowd of men gathered around the millrock and stayed till after midnight, but nothing was seen nor heard.

In a few days Dr. Coewell was located at Troy and visited at Nancy Lake's on Sundays. The wedding was set for early Spring and he was planning to build a home, when Fort Sumter was fired upon. Lisita was making

preparations for her wedding day. Most people were laying aside their looms and spinning wheels by this time but used them again after the war. A piece of plain white cambric had been purchased for her wedding gown. Not many people had sewing machines at that time, so she made the dress by hand. Four widths were put in the skirt, which was gathered to a belt at the waist line. The waist was made with a yoke, the lower part being gathered and sewed to the yoke at top, and to the belt at bottom. The stitches in this gown were so small one could hardly see them, and with it on Lisita looked like a wild flower of the forest, and under Dr. Coewell's smile a pink tint crept over her face, like the blush of the rose at dawn.

As time went on a call for volunteers was made. The great Civil War was at hand, and the women who had seen signs in the sky of the oncoming war, knew its meaning after the bloody battles which left in their wake the dead, dying and wounded who had served their country in time of need. The men were volunteering all around and Dr. Coewell who wished to aid his country at this critical time,

made a sudden resolve: he must be ready to go with the rest that evening.

In an hour's time he and a minister were galloping toward Nancy Lake's. They reached there before noon. He told them his intentions and in a short time Lisita was dressed in her wedding gown, and all through the cruel war Dr. Coewell never forgot her innocent face. They were married at noon and after eating the wedding dinner Nancy Lake had prepared, he covered his bride's face with kisses and marched away.

During the trying days of the war, 'mid the sufferings of the wounded and dying, while he endeavored to alleviate pain, the image of his young and beautiful bride was ever before him. Lisita, who was only sixteen years old, but really older in manners and efficiency, prayed daily for the safe return of her stalwart husband.

Mrs. Coewell received a letter a few days after his enlistment and as she read its meaning, her eyes filled with tears, but welling up in her heart was a thought of pride for her country and she was proud to give a son for such a great cause. When Cornelius Coewell read his son's letter, he said " My grand-

father fought in the Revolution and I was in the war of 1812. Now it seems meet that my son too, be a soldier for our country and learn the horrors of war.

During the exciting times of the war, Lisita, her grandfather and Aunt, with a supply of blankets, slept out sometimes so no harm would come to them from the Confederate Raiders. Cornelius Coewell lost a horse, saddle and bridle during Imboden's Raid. At another farm house, in the neighborhood, after eating a fine dinner the raiders had ordered the women to prepare, they drank all the buttermilk they wanted, poured the rest on the floor and danced in it.

Many were killed by irregular troops of Confederates or "bushwhackers."

Mr. Alexander heard from his brother-in-law across the sea, who told of Robert Thompson's trial and sentence to life imprisonment. The old gentleman, who was near seventy, seemed to be growing younger all the time, and took unto himself Nancy Lake for a wife. By the close of the Civil War, her vine covered cabin that had sheltered her father and mother in earlier days, and herself for fifty years, had grown into a large two-story farm-

house and much land around was added to her little farm.

Cornelius Coewell learned by letter of his son's marriage. He knew Lisita's love for Cave Hollow and had it made into a modern Eden. The house was weatherboarded, porch built overlooking the little stream of water that ran through the hollow—a well was dug by the back porch, a milk house built over the stream, a yard around the house was cleared, raked off and burned and grass seed sown, the yard enclosed with a picket fence, as was a garden that lay at the back. A grove of maple trees were left standing a little way from he house, while sturdy trees of different kinds, surrounded the cleared fields.

An orchard was set out on the hillside, and the old cave was fitted up with bins so that it would rival our modern cellars. The house was furnished with woden rockers and split bottomed chairs, wooden tables and bedsteads, made by James Grant, the fisherman. The beds, on which were straw and feather ticks were dressed with linen sheets, pillow cases and homespun counterpanes. Rag carpets were spread on the sitting room floor,

and in bedrooms upstairs and down. When they had finished their work in Cave Hollow and returned home, news was awaiting them of the great victory at Gettysburg, and they hoped to see Victor before long.

Dr. Coewell wrote to his wife and invited them to meet him at Coehern in September of the next year. William Alexander, his wife and Lisita arrived in time to help prepare the infare supper. When he arrived, greeted his wife and the rest, they sat down to a bountiful supper. Lisita noticed her husband had changed his youthful look for a more manly one, in his four year's absence, while he could see that his wife was more stately and womanly. After a few days at Coehern they strolled across the hill hand in hand till they reached Cave Hollow where they first met. What a change had been wrought in the old hollow which a few years before had been the home of trees, and their honeymoon was spent where Lisita had spent some of her girlhood days, the place of all the world she loved best, a bower of love and contentment which they had earned by sacrifice and through the workings of a kind fate.

Nancy Lake visited them again the next

year and they took her to see a steamboat, which to her was the wonder of the age. She told them of William Kerr's happy marriage, and of Tommy Hunter who was teaching school at Horn Creek.

After the slaves were freed, the four who were at Cornelius Coewell's as servants, refused to leave, and two of them were given to Lisita for servants.

In the evening of life, Roanne Coewell spent much of her time by the fireside of her son, and Cornelius, junior, persisted in carrying some old saddle pockets all the while, and when in front of Roanne, he would say, "Take mec'in, gamma. I'se a docte."

His grandma would smile and appear to take his medicine which always made her well. On many occasions, the doctor, who was now known as an Army Surgeon, rode out of sight down the lane in Cave Hollow, which was nothing but a narrow path a few years before, carrying all his medicine with him. He charged from fifty cents to one dollar for a visit in the neighborhood, and twenty-five cents for a call on the road, but the doctor earned a name for himself in that early day, and the sunshine of health, hap-

piness and plenty shone around his fireside. He and his wife have gone to rest but through their offspring comes one who perpetuates his ancestors in manners, looks and actions.

Great changes have taken place at Coehern since that time and the old buildings have been replaced by new ones. The paths that seemed so long, in earlier years, are short now, or have been made in other places. The stillness that once reigned in Cave Hollow is broken by the whir of the aeroplane and the honk, honk, of the automobile, and the beauty of the forest is gone, save in memory.

The mystery of the old mill is partially a mystery yet. The only solution of it is that a murder had been committed in that neighborhood and the murderer never was found. Years after when the old mill was torn down, the bones of a man and a dog were found in a place that had been dug out beneath the mill, where it skirted the road. The cry was supposed to have been sent forth at nightfall to frighten people away, so that he might go forth in search of food, unmolested, had not been heard for years before the bones were found, and it was supposed that the man had

at last grown too weak to move the heavy stone that concealed them, and thus perished.

The old mill finished its work and has long since gone to decay, the millrock has been taken away, and no trace of the old building marks the place of the so-called mystery.

THE OLD MILL.

Eliza A. Webb.

The miller is silent, and so is the mill,
The dam is still there, and the water is still,
The wheel does not turn in the water so fair,
But I feel in my heart I can see it there.

At the opening gate where the waters run
The wheel went round like the earth round the sun,
The water in silvery sprays would fall,
And I feel in my heart I can see it all.

With horses and people standing round,
And many a grist that had to be ground,

Whether talking of farming, of "critter," or
cow,
I feel in my heart I can hear them now.

The jolly old miller was busy all day,
From each sack he took toll and put it away.
For mush and milk made a supper complete,
And I feel in my heart I can see him eat.

The water flowed on and reached the sea,
As time goes on for you and me,
And we sometimes stop in the mighty race
For we feel in our hearts we have gained
a pace.

Though length is not gain, nor fleetness the
way,
But to run so we're farther every day
In the work of the Master who calleth for
thee,
And I feel in my heart there is work for me.

But the miller is silent and so is the mill,
The water in the old millpond is still.
The wheel has fallen beside the shore
And I feel in my heart it will turn no more.

In memory it lives, though its task is done,
As a noble work lives on and on,
And when we are silent like the mill of old,
I feel in my heart, our deeds will be told.

Then in four walls of clay to repose secure;
No more hardships or trials here endure.
The waters of the mill-race have come and gone,
And I feel in my heart we are moving on.

The Savior, who trod upon earth among men,
With the saints in glory, is coming again.
The mill wheel is silent and gone to decay,
And I feel in my heart we are passing away.

The End

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